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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts



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Thespian Eastern Conference

York, Pa, April 14 and 15

FORTY-SEVEN Thespian troupes located in Pennsylvania and surrounding states have indicated they will be represented at the Dramatic Arts Conference scheduled for April 14, 15, at the William Penn Senior High School, York, Pa., with Regional Director Leon C. Miller in charge. Present indications also promise an attendance of students and faculty sponsors number well over 500. The conference is being sponsored by Thespian Troupe 520 of York, Pennsylvania, with the cooperation of The National Thespian Society.



Leon C. Miller

The program for the two-day gathering will involve participation by at least twelve Thespian troupes from as many high schools. Highlights of the meeting will be the presentation of four one-act plays, workshop meetings, readings, performance of a full-length play, *Eastward in Eden*, and major addresses by Dr. Marjorie Dycke of the School of Performing Arts, New York City, and Dr. Joe Zimmerman of the School of the Theatre, Temple University. No less important are the social events which will come to a close on the evening of April 15 with a semi-formal dance at the Hotel Yorktowne.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Persons wishing to attend the Conference are urged to enroll at once. Registration forms may be obtained by writing to Mr. Leon C. Miller, Conference Director, Wm. Penn Senior High School, York, Pa. The enrollment fee for the two days is only \$1.00. The school cafeteria will furnish the banquet meal scheduled for Friday night and two meals on Saturday (lunch and dinner) for \$2.25. All out-of-town delegates will be housed in private homes of students and friends of the school. There will be no charge for housing accommodations. All students attending the conference must be accompanied by their faculty sponsors.

All Thespian-affiliated schools are urged to send pictures, posters, programs, etc., for the conference exhibit. Materials should be addressed to Miss Elizabeth J. Niederhauser, Chairman of Exhibits, Wm. Penn Senior High School, York, Pa. Materials must reach Miss Niederhauser by April 1. Exhibit materials will not be returned unless they are accompanied by two self-addressed labels and sufficient return postage.

The program for the conference is as follows:

Friday, April 14

12:00 M. — 5:30 P. M. Registration
Annex Auditorium — entrance, South Beaver Street

5:30 P. M. — 7:30 P. M. Conference Banquet
Annex Cafeteria
PRESIDING: Leon C. Miller, Conference Director

Introduction of Conference Personnel
Roll Call of Thespian Troupes

8:00 P. M. . . Performance of *EASTWARD IN EDEN* by Dorothy Gardner
Main Auditorium

Joint Society Play — William Penn Senior High School, York, Pa.
Directed by Leon C. Miller; staged by Miss Margaretta Hallock.

Saturday, April 15

8:30 A. M. Lobby of Main Auditorium — Late Registration
9:30 A. M. General Assembly
Main Auditorium

PRESIDING: Leon C. Miller, Conference Director

"Welcome from the York City School District" Dr. Arthur W. Ferguson, Superintendent of York City Schools
"Welcome from the William Penn Senior High School" — Dr. Edward A. Glatfelter, Principal
"Responses and Welcome" — Miss Barbara Wellington, National Director of The National Thespian Society
Address: "The School of Performing Arts" — Dr. Marjorie Dycke, Drama Chairman of the School of Performing Arts, New York City

10:30 A. M. — 11:30 A. M. Workshops

Make-up (demonstration) — Miss Mildred B. Hahn, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 416 — Reading Senior High School, Reading, Pennsylvania, and selected members of her troupe.

Library

Hostess, Miss M. Dorothy Schwartzer

Student Directors (panel discussion) — Miss Estelle L. McElroy, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 598 — Central High School, Bridgeport Connecticut and selected members of her troupe.

Annex Auditorium

Hostess, Miss Jean Donahey

Radio (panel discussion) — Miss Myrtle L. Paetznick, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 364 — Jamestown High School, Jamestown, New York, and selected members of her troupe.

Room 123

Hostess, Miss Elizabeth Niederhauser

Interpretive Acting — Miss Mabel Clough Wright, Sponsor of Thespian Troupe 307 — Wilmington High School, Wilmington, Delaware, and members of her troupe.

Main Auditorium

Hostess, Miss Barbara Wellington

12:00 M. — 1:00 P. M. Lunch
Annex Cafeteria

12:00 M. Luncheon Meeting (Faculty Sponsors only)
Teachers' Dining Room, Annex Cafeteria

PRESIDING: Miss Margaretta Hallock, Conference Co-chairman

Address: "Training High School Students for College Dramatics" Dr. Joe Zimmerman, School of the Theatre, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1:30 P. M. Play Productions, Main Auditorium
Main Auditorium

PRESIDING: Leon C. Miller, Conference Director

"The Wall" by Verne Powers — Members of Thespian Troupe 570 — William Fleming High School, Roanoke, Virginia; and directed by Miss Genevieve Dickinson, Sponsor.

(Note: This is the initial performance of this play, which is not yet published. Mr. Powers personally requested that Troupe 570 be the first to perform it publicly.)

Dramalogue — Miss Evelyn Pobicky, a member of Thespian Troupe 374, Roosevelt High School, Dunellen, New Jersey; Mrs. Lucy Coughlin, Sponsor.

Scenes from "The Taming of the Shrew" — Members of Thespian Troupe 672, Nelson W. Aldrich High School, Lakewood, Rhode Island; and directed by Mr. Daniel Turner, Sponsor.

Dramalogue — Miss Eleanor Beard, a member of Thespian Troupe 502, Martinsburg High School, Martinsburg, West Virginia; Miss Marie V. Dean, Sponsor.

"Antic Spring" by Robert Nail — Members of Thespian Troupe 755, Susquehanna Township High School, Progress-Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and directed by Miss Myrtle E. Reigle and Miss Mary A. Knupp.

Dramalogue — Floreal Prieto; Thomas Hennessy, alternate, a member of Thespian Troupe 888, Central High School, Syracuse, New York; Miss Cecilia C. Anderson, Sponsor.

Cutting from "Life With Father" by Lindsay and Crouse — Members of Troupe 156, Revere High School, Revere, Massachusetts; and directed by Miss Emily L. Mitchell, Sponsor.

Critic-Judges: Dr. Marjorie Dycke and Dr. Joe Zimmerman

4:00 P. M. Tea (Faculty Sponsors only)
Room 21

"Get Acquainted and Talkfest"

5:00 P. M. — 6:00 P. M. Dinner
Annex Cafeteria

8:30 P. M. — 11:30 P. M. Semi-formal Dance
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EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor and Business Manager:

Ernest Bavely College Hill Station
Cincinnati 24, Ohio

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Talbot Pearson Stage, Inc.
New Orleans, La.
Paul Myers .. Theatre Collection, Public Library
New York, N. Y.

Department Editors:

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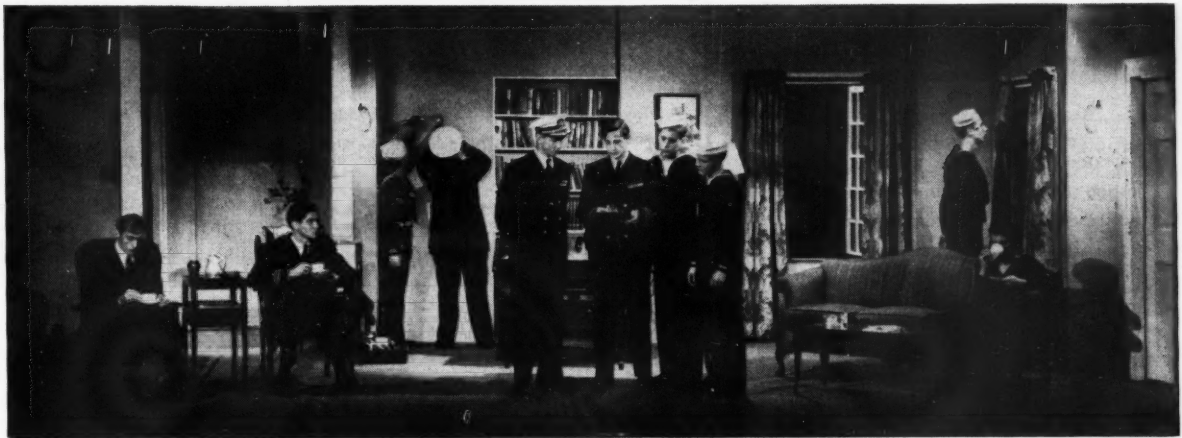
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DRAMATICS

Scene from the new mystery play, *The Traitor*, given at the Elyria, Ohio High School (The Spian Troupe 946) with Nina J. Baker as director.



Checklist for Safety in Dramatics

By EDWARD B. JESSON

Loan Play Library Service, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

A fine performance of *The Clod* was driving towards its climax. The southern soldiers had driven the old farm wife out of her stolidness into insulted anger. She grabbed a pistol, fired, and one of the southerners fell. She fired again, but there was only a click. But so tense was the situation and so taut were her nerves that her anger carried her across the stage to grapple with the second soldier. Suddenly a second shot was heard. The soldier fell to the floor, screaming with pain and writhing like a suddenly released spring. A nervous laugh spread through the audience. The actors stood aghast for a moment, then the actress broke into hysterical sobs. The curtain was drawn.

While the actress was grappling with the soldier, she had unknowingly pressed the pistol against his abdomen while her finger was still on the trigger. In the struggle she had pressed it. At so close a range, the wad of the blank cartridge was as good as a bullet. The wad penetrated the boy's muscle and stopped just short of entering the abdominal cavity. It might have been fatal. It was, however, an escape too close for comfort; though, thanks to modern medicine, the boy was soon convalescent.

The year before, in the same state high school festival, an actor was sprayed with shot from a cartridge supposed by the prop man to be a blank. Future festivals in this state will follow the lead of Texas and permit no practical gun on stage.

If no more than the health and the life of a high school student were involved in such an accident, it would still be enough to make it worth while taking every precaution against

such an occurrence. A teacher has a prime obligation to protect the welfare of his students. But more is at stake. The future of dramatics in a school where such an accident occurs is jeopardized. The future of one-act play festivals is placed in hazard, and hence dramatics throughout the state. The job of the teacher and with it the jobs of all teachers of speech is made less secure. For all these reasons, and most especially for the first—the health of students, such things must be made as rare as possible.

To help make accidents rare, here is a check-list of the chief hazards in producing a play. There are certainly others, since many plays have their own peculiar sources of danger. (It would be well to check this list before and during each production.)

GUNS: The safest, and in some ways the best method of handling guns in a play is to have no real guns at all either on stage or off. There are distinct advantages in using fake guns: 1. They are safe. 2. They may be clearly aimed at the object of fire. There is no need to handle the business in such a way as to make the audience think that the gun is aimed where in fact it is not. 3. They give more freedom in action to the actors. The necessity of thinking of safety as well as acting is eliminated. 4. They look more real than the real thing.

The safest method of making the sound off stage is to use a stick, 1"x1"x3'. Rest one end on a wooden floor, holding

it up at a 45 degree angle. Apply great pressure with the foot on the bottom of the stick. Let it go suddenly. If the pressure of the foot is great enough the sound which results is sharp, loud, and clear. It may take an extra half-hour of rehearsal to co-ordinate sound and action. But this is not more difficult than co-ordinating action with the switchboard. The safety which results is worth it.

If you must use a pistol off stage, there are other points to be considered. Martha Van Kleeck, field representative of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre, writes us: "First of all guns are very dangerous. No one should ever use live ammunition backstage for any reason whatsoever. I remember last summer an item appeared in the local paper about a professional summer theatre group who were using live ammunition in a rifle backstage for sound effects. The sound man was shooting the gun into a sandbag. One night one of the bullets ricocheted, hitting a woman in the audience. Fortunately, she was not too seriously injured. However, it is never safe to use live ammunition. Blank cartridges can also be very dangerous if they are fired near a face. They can cause severe powder burns and even blindness."

Needless to say, the firing should be done by a responsible adult, one who is not given to fidgeting. Recently in a large university, a college student shot himself in the hand while waiting off stage for his cue to fire. And remember, the wad of a blank can ricochet off of anything: the floor, sand, and even the surface of a tub of water if improperly aimed. W. Frederic Plette of Little Rock Junior College, Little Rock, Arkansas, recommends the type of pistol used by starters in track meets. It has a solid barrel and the magazine can take nothing but blanks. Had such a pistol been used in one school in Nebraska, a student actor would not have been shot to death during a rehearsal, the teacher would not have been dismissed, nor dramatics eliminated from the school.

KNIVES AND FOILS are other lethal weapons which cause trouble. Harold B. Obee of the Bowling Green State University, Ohio, writes: "Rubber or wooden knives should always be used

Designing Scenery for the Stage

By A. S. Gillette

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(except when they are to remain sheathed at all times) unless absolutely essential models are necessary. When real unsheathed knives are used the tip should always be taped as are rapier points."

Mrs. George F. Mitchell of the New England High School Drama Festival makes a point about foils: "In a duel scene in Tarkington's *MONSIEUR BEAUCAIRE*, one fencing foil skidded up the opposing foil and caught the actor just under the eye. This could have been a bad accident since the eye is practically the only spot vulnerable to a (taped) fencing foil. I can think of no way of avoiding this situation other than cautioning the actors and much rehearsing, since well acted fencing scenes can be dangerous."

(OTHER FIGHTS: Miss Van Kleeck also points out that in a fight without weapons it is still possible to injure an actor. The point is to show an effective fight without crippling your actor. Padded costumes prevent injuries in falls, and careful rehearsing with reliable actors should prevent other injuries.)

Fire in a theatre is particularly dangerous for the resulting panic injures more people than the fire. Miss Van Kleeck urges that all scenery be fireproofed, as the law in your state may require. She also urges that there be no lighted kerosene lamps on stage at any time, and suggests that a candle in the lamps is effective and much safer. It is even safer to obtain a battery light to use in the lamp. Open flame candles are also very dangerous. A battery candle is not only safe, but its use prevents the uneasiness which moves an audience when seeing open flame candles.

Mr. Obee urges: "In addition to all regular fire fighting equipment, there should be extra portable hand equipment within reach of the stage crew and the switchboard operator. They should be thoroughly briefed in its use and how to handle a situation where smoke starts pouring into an auditorium from the stage... *Electricians* particularly should be alerted to the reason of fires of electrical origin and should be briefed as to putting them out." Such fires need a special chemical extinguisher. Consult your fire department.

SCENERY AND LIGHTS: Miss Van Kleeck warns of the dangers of carelessness in putting up scenery: "Be sure that all technical crews are trained for their jobs. One ever-present danger is the crew member that is up on a step ladder setting lights or doing work high above the stage floor. It is all too easy to drop wrenches or hammers onto the stage and if people are wandering about below, it might be very easy to injure someone seriously. Also be sure that the lights are correctly hung so that they will not fall down. Another thing that is important in a small theatre... is to check the rigging... I remember working in one small country theatre where the rigging was a series of blocks and beams which were only nailed together. The weight of a pipe of lights pulled the beams right out of the blocks. The nails simply did not hold... A pipe of heavy lights falling on a chorus of an operetta would be certain to have some fatal results."

The scenery on the stage level can also be dangerous. An ill-supported door frame (or any other part of the scenery) falling on an actor looking the other way would have very serious consequences. And don't forget light cords leading to lamps on stage. They should be covered in some way so that there is no possibility of an actor tripping over them.

(There are excellent books on the market which explain the proper ways of hanging lights and setting scenery which will avoid accidents if followed.)

MAKE-UP: It may astonish some to hear that this is a hazard. It is. Some skins are very sensitive to certain ingredients in make-up. You might not be able to use an actor after dress rehearsal because of his allergy. There are non-allergy make-up materials on the market which can be obtained with little trouble.

DRIVING: In the state of the traffic on the highways today, driving to and from a dramatic contest is a serious hazard. Some states require that the driver of cars used to transport actors or athletes to contests be an adult and an experienced driver with a clean safety record. It is better to cancel a performance than to risk the lives of your cast and the future of dramatics in your school by using a driver who, because of his youth, may be blamed (though unjustly) for an accident. The past sins of the theatre world are likely to be remembered and the drama blamed for an accident which would be quickly forgotten if it happened to others.

This is true, also, of any mistakes people in dramatics make. It is a shame that it is so, but the fact may as well be faced. There are no excuses in the theatre, and least of all when safety and health of students is involved. This is perhaps all to the good. It keeps us on our toes.

DRAMATICS

Musical Theatre in U. S. A.

(1914 to 1950)

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York 18, N. Y.

BY the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, the United States had already established its claim of having made a contribution to the theatre through its musical productions. The war years, 1914-1918, had seen the lyrical theatre acquire considerable impetus. A consideration of what factors in a wartime society turn people toward music would provide the basis for another series of articles. During World War II, 1939-1945, the musical theatre once again boomed and acquired new vitality. It was in the Civil War period, we recall, that the first indigenous musical productions in the American theatre were brought forward. We are, however, getting ahead of our story.

In the period immediately preceding World War I, the musical productions of the American theatre borrowed considerably from those of Central Europe. The operetta, which had come to the forefront notably in the theatres of Vienna, Prague and Berlin, was the favorite of American audiences as well. Franz Lehar, Johann Strauss, — older and younger — still served as models for the younger composers. Even our own Victor Herbert created his operettas after the style set by the masters of the Old World. It was not creation so much as re-stating in the American idiom. This is not to imply that the creations of Herbert and of those of his school were not eagerly sought after and applauded. *Babes in Toyland*, *The Red Mill*, *Sweethearts* and many of the others, are still among the favorites of great numbers of theatregoers. We have, nevertheless, departed from this mode of musical expression.

These productions, however, do not represent the entire musical phase of the theatre of the post World War I period. The revue had gained enormous popularity and was being produced with ever increasing opulence. Late in the first decade of the twentieth century, Florenz Ziegfeld had produced his first FOLLIES. By the middle of the century's second decade, they were advertised as "An American Institution. Within a few years they had more than earned the title. Ziegfeld — and those on his executive staff — were master showmen. All efforts were concentrated upon keeping the producer's name and that of his productions, constantly before the public. All manner of stunts were employed to publicize the stars. The "Follies Girl" became synonymous with "chorus girl." Over the stage door of the theatre at which the FOLLIES played was a placard announcing: "Through these portals pass the most beautiful girls in the world."

The *Follies* were not, however, merely glorified "girlie" shows. Many artists of considerable talent appeared in them. A partial list might include Eddie Cantor, Fanny Brice, Anna Held, Ina

Claire, Will Rogers, W. C. Fields, Joe Jackson. Top composers and lyricists were engaged to provide the musical numbers. Outstanding dramatists were sought to write the sketches. Through the 'twenties, so great was the success of these offerings, that several similar annual productions came into being. George White produced the *Scandals*, Earl Carroll called his revue the *Vanities* and the producing Shubert Brothers brought the *Passing Shows* into their mammoth Winter Garden in New York.

Large sections of the public were becoming a bit wearied with the opulent, somewhat stereotyped girlie shows. The attempts to entertain the "tired business man" were succeeding in putting even larger numbers of the audience to sleep. So rigidly did many of the shows adhere to the model, that the critics were able to call the next number, or to write of "the boy-girl number," "the blues number," "Moon in June Number," etc. By the middle of the 1920's the theatre-going public was more than ready for a change.

The revolution was brought about through the young experimental groups in the theatre. Two of the most energetic of these organizations had been operating in New York since just after the war years. One was the Neighborhood Playhouse, which held forth in a theatre on Grand Street on the lower East Side of Manhattan; the other was the Theatre Guild, which had started as the Washington Square Players in

This is the fourth in a series of articles on American musical theatre by Mr. Myers. The two remaining articles of this series will appear in our April and May issues.—EDITOR

Greenwich Village and had graduated to the Garrick Theatre nearer the theatrical center of town. In 1925, the latter organization had become respectable and wealthy enough to open a theatre of its own and named it for the Guild.

Since 1923, one of the annual treats of the Neighborhood Playhouse, was the GRAND STREET FOLLIES. Every spring, throughout that decade, the intimate revue lured theatre goers downtown to the Playhouse. A partial listing of the talent in these revues must include: Dorothy Sands, Albert Carroll, Aline MacMahon, Joanna Roos, Paula Trueman, Agnes Morgan, the Misses Alice and Irene Lewisohn, Aline Bernstein and Anna MacDonald were among those responsible for the productions. They were musical revues which had employed the intellects and the artistry of those involved to bring them to fruition. They did not operate on the premise that a musical was produced to entertain an audience without intelligence, taste or perception. Among the highlights of the GRAND STREET FOLLIES were cleverly conceived satires on the current theatre hits or favorites. The edition of 1924, included a famous travesty entitled, "THE SHEWING-UP OF JO LE-BLANCO." Herein, in the manner of George Bernard Shaw's playlet, was depicted the travails of securing cut-rate theatre tickets.

In May, 1925, the Theatre Guild brought into its Garrick Theatre an intimate revue — *The Garrick Gaieties*. The production was largely the work of two recent Columbia University graduates, Richard Rodgers (the music) and Lorenz Hart (the lyrics). Something like the career of this team had been recently depicted in Hollywood and released as *Words and Music*. Let not this film, however, be taken too factually . . . certain wide liberties were taken. Their work did play an important part



Scene from *South Pacific*, one of the outstanding musical shows to hit Broadway. (Left to right): Barbara Luna, Noelle Leon, Mary Martin. The opera singer, Enzio Pianza, the opera star, is seen looking in on this happy trio. (Photograph by John Swope.)

in the musical theatre of the next fifteen years and Richard Rodgers is still the dominant figure in this field. Lorenz Hart had a genius for neatly rhyming lyrics and topical satire. In *The Garrick Gaieties* occurred the famous ode to New York and the unforgettable lines of:

We'll take Manhattan
The Bronx, and Staten
Island, too. I'd love
To do the zoo, with you.

The recollections of the productions of Rodgers and Hart are among the brightest of recent years. One thinks immediately of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, *Babes in Arms*, *Pal Joey*, *The Boys From Syracuse* and *Too Many Girls*. In *Babes in Arms*, Mitzi Green proved her mettle as an adult entertainer and her rendition of "The Lady Is A Tramp" has been of the highlights in recent musical theatre. In this occurred Hart's lyric:

Folks went to London and left me behind
I missed the crowning
Queen Mary won't mind.
I won't play Scarlett
In Gone With The Wind —
That's why the lady is a tramp.

From *Pal Joey*, adapted from the John O'Hara stories, one recalls Vivienne Segal and Gene Kelly as the world-weary cosmopolites. In this offering, too, Jean Cast sang the definite word on burlesque in a song entitled (simply) — "Zip." *The Boys From Syracuse* was a musical rendering of Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*, a natural for musical comedy plot material.

Rodgers and Hart were not the only figures in the musicals of that epoch. The top favorite of many was Jerome Kern, the composer of *Show Boat*. First produced by Ziegfeld at his beautiful new theatre, this operetta will always occupy a favorite place in the hearts of theatregoers. It has been revived several times and been played all over the world. That first company, in 1926, will always be held in special regard. Helen Morgan, Norma Terriss, Edna May Oliver, Eva Puck and Sammy White, Jules Bledsoe, Howard Marsh, Charles Winninger. The score gave us "Old Man River," "Can't Help Lovin' That Man of Mine," "Why Do I Love You" and "Life Upon the Wicked Stage." Based upon Edna Ferber's novel of the Mississippi, this was America set to music. The lyrics were written by Oscar Hammerstein, II.

Among the other great hits of Jerome Kern were *Music in the Air*, and *Roberta* (adapted from a novel by Alice Duer Miller). It was in this wonderful musical that Tamara sang "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." In the original production, too, were two little known musical aspirants — Bob Hope and Fred MacMurray. Mr. Kern turned his talents toward composing for the screen, and wrote music for some of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musical films.

Other of the theatre's contributors

were Irving Berlin (currently represented by *Miss Liberty*), Vincent Youmans, B. G. DeSylva and — of course — George Gershwin. The latter has begun to take a place as one of the immortals of twentieth century American music. His concert pieces (among them the "Rhapsody in Blue" and "An American in Paris") are constantly appearing as part of programmes of serious music. His work for musical comedy is of equal importance. Some of his songs — with lyrics by his brother, Ira — marked top spots in our recent culture. In 1935, they turned their hand toward folk opera and, once again, the Theatre Guild tried something novel. Dorothy and Dubose Heyward's *Porgy* had been produced by the Theatre Guild and had been an outstanding success. Gershwin used the play as the basis for his folk music, *Porgy and Bess*. Once again, a new note had been sounded. The New York papers sent both their drama critics and their music critics to cover the premiere, and both returned reports that were filled with enthusiasm.

In this rapid survey, one is forced to telescope events so that sometimes an erroneous emphasis is thrown upon an event or too little stress is placed upon another. In the latter 'thirties, both Jerome Kern and Lorenz Hart died. Richard Rodgers was left without a lyricist; Oscar Hammerstein II without a composer. Some genius (or several) brought these two together. Once again the Theatre Guild figured as the producer. In the middle of World War II, the first production of the new combination was brought forward, *OKLAHOMA*. The musical was based upon Lynn Riggs' *GREEN GROW THE LILACS* — a summary of which I'm certain is unnecessary. The opening on 31 March, 1942, established both a new team and a new note in American musicals. Agnes De Mille had been employed to design and stage the choreography for *OKLAHOMA*. Her ballet, *RODEO*, had incorporated many of the features essential to the dances of the an integral part of musicals and, to a certain extent, this is still true.

Oklahoma became the outstanding musical hit. The New York run broke record after record and duplicate companies started people singing "People Will Say We're in Love" and "The Surrey With the Fringe on Top" all over the world. Alfred Drake, Joan Roberts, Celeste Holm (as the girl who "can't say 'no'"), Howard De Silva and Joan McCracken of the DeMille ballet all went on from the original company to stardom. An examination of the records of performers currently appearing in musicals in the United States today would reveal that an overwhelming majority had done some service in some company of *Oklahoma*.

It established the dance as an integral part of American musical. Agnes DeMille went from that to *Bloomer Girl*, for which she staged the unforgettable "Sunday in Cicero Falls" sequence. Here was as genuine and delightful a bit of musical Americana as the recent stage has produced, though all of *Bloomer Girl* did not live up to that standard.

Rodgers and Hammerstein set themselves to musicalizing Molnar's famous play, *LILI-OM*. Long part of the repertory of Miss LeGallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre and familiar, too, as a film, the story of the braggart Liliom for the delicate Julie was well-loved in the theatre. The Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein transformed the European locale to New Bedford, Massachusetts, of about fifty years ago. *CAROUSEL* became the name of the production, and it is still the favorite Rodgers and Hammerstein production for many of us. The score was magnificent, and the composers caught the most delicate blending of drama, comedy, folk play and fantasy. The scene in Heaven with the celestial judge hanging the stars out on the drying line is incomparable. Their next opus was *ALLEGRO*, which took another step in the direction of operatic expression.

It has long been my contention that the latter works of Rodgers and Hammerstein, such works as the current *Lost in the Stars* by Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson (adapted from Alan Paton's novel, *Cry the Beloved Country*), Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* and his recent *Regina* (based upon Lillian Hellman's play *The Little Foxes*) are as close to operatic expression as the American theatre will approach. The mode of expression of the Italian and French operatic composers does not seem suitable to expression of American themes. We may borrow from them — and from the operas of Mozart or Wagner or the Russians, but it will be tempered by our folk and modern jazz traditions.

All of the strains we have examined in the survey (though of necessity too rapid) of our musical development are observable in today's theatre. The Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein have taken still another bold step forward in their development of serious musical theatre with *South Pacific*. People were aghast when it was announced that these famous gentlemen were using James Michener's Pulitzer Prize novel, *Tales of the South Pacific*, as the basis for a musical. Many felt that this time the impossible had been attempted, but the success is overwhelming — both artistic and commercial. Some proof of the popularity of the production can be gained from the line which forms before the Majestic Theatre box-office every morning at six to get standing-room for that day's performance. No seats are available before next August.

The "girlie" show is with us in *AS THE GIRLS GO*, in which one of the theatre's greatest clowns, Bobby Clark, plays the husband of the United States' first woman president. This is a musical in the tradition of the twenties. Two excellent revues have been discussed in recent issues of *DRAMATICS* — *TOUCH AND GO* and the earlier *LEND AN EAR*. Both are descendants of the *GARRICK GAITIES* and the *GRAND STREET FOLLIES*. The casts are composed very largely of highly talented newcomers doing fresh, satiric thrusts at prevailing modes and manners. New York's newest hit is a musical version of Anita Loos' famous novel *GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES*. It is an excursion into reminiscence of the flapper period and affords an opportunity for us to laugh at our not too distant past.

Planning Arena Production

By KELLY YEATON

Department of Dramatics, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa.

SO you think that you want to set up an arena theatre, or at least to give a play in central staging? And you want to know how to begin? Begin by careful planning!

You must remember that the medium is no longer new or untried. True, the public may not be very familiar with it, as yet, but it *will* be. The actual situation is that there is a tested technique with the special advantage of novelty. But since it isn't *really* an experiment, if you do have a failure, you must realize that it is *your* failure, don't try to blame it on the method. The fact of the matter is that if you have any type of drama in your town, you can depend upon a favorable reception of central staging. The public will come to the first one because it is a novelty. Your real problem is to be sure that your audience will come back to the second one; and this is not a problem of staging at all. It is the ancient problem of having a good enough play, well enough done, and this is largely a matter of acting and directing.

Don't try to find any rules to central staging. The principle to follow is cruelly simple and inflexible. Apply your observation and theatrical-common-sense to the given fact . . . the play is going to be witnessed in this particular manner. The actors are going to be seen and heard at close range, and from unpredictable angles. It is bad when the actors all have their backs to a particular section of the audience. It always was, and always will be. Actors are more expressive and present more varied aspects when moving about. They always did, and always will. No real changes have taken place. Don't expect them. True, you will soon notice that arena actors have a bad habit of getting too close to each other and blocking a lot of sightlines to the faces. This is a more serious fault here than on the ordinary stage, but you wouldn't need to be told. You could see it for yourself. Soon you will develop your own basic phrases of direction . . . they sound only a little different from the warnings of any director . . . some of my own standard calls are . . .

"Break it up! Keep moving, remember. Stay alive and on your feet!" "Keep away from her! Stay back! Use your voice and talk to her from where you are!"

"Are you glued to that chair?"

"You don't need to look at him just because you are speaking to him! People in daily life reach with their voices as much as their eyes."

"Go back and do it again. Come through the auditorium door just as she speaks to Mr. Simpson, and let the door swing behind you. It will slam as you are half-way down the aisle. But don't say anything important until you are in the light."

"Remember, please . . . the pool of light is the stage! Don't play in the dark! Take it again . . . say 'good-bye', turn, and go down the aisle, in character, just as you would if you had to make all your exits from a regular stage down the aisle through the audience."

That's the way it sounds to the actor. But don't hesitate to change conventions as needed. The only rule to remember is the one we used on the regular theatre . . . establish your conventions clearly, and don't change them during the play. We use as few as we can for each play, and keep attention off them as much as possible. We may determine that the windows on one side of the stage have a good view of the orphanage, and act that way, but we don't emphasize it more than we need to.

The Play

You will be wise to choose a script that you can almost type-cast. It may sound too easy to be interesting, but with a new type of production there will be enough to worry about without too difficult problems of character. At four feet no young person can look very genuine as a middle-aged man, even if he can act the part splendidly, and he will need to. I would suggest that you pick your first play from scripts like *SPRING DANCE*, *STAGE DOOR*, or *OUT OF THE FRYING PAN*. In these most of your actors may legitimately look like themselves, and your best actors can take the few character parts. These are well-tested plays in college theatres. It may be that high schools will find other plays more suited to their needs, perhaps *BROTHER RAT* or *WHAT A LIFE!*, but this is yet to be determined.

Fundamentally, arena plays do tend toward single interior sets, just as other plays do, but when there are several sets the audience is far less bored by property crews clearing and setting up than they are by the blank curtain with the occasional sounds of bustle beyond.

At present there is a strong tendency toward realism, also, and this is the best style at present. I rather expect that high schools may develop a trend toward stylization before any other sort of arena theatre, since there are so few good plays written for the young actor, and they may see the possibilities of playing in masks, and in artificial styles, before the rest of us.

The Place

If you can find an old lodge room, say about 40 by 50 feet, with a ceiling more than 14 feet high from which you can hang lights, then you are in luck. Such rooms have the elevated seats that arena directors hope for, but seldom find. They are also equipped with a kitchen that is useful if you wish to serve refreshments, comfortable and permanent seats, waiting rooms, and a peephole in the door. There may even be dressing rooms, although they are likely not to be where you want them. Occasionally, one may be found that has the most splendid feature of all, a control room with dimmers to the house lights and a good view of the central area. Little more could be desired, and the chances are that you will find few of these comforts in the rooms that you inspect.

What do you really *need*? Well, you need a room larger than 20 x 30 feet, a ceiling of more than 13 feet, at least two entrances to the auditorium, some way of controlling light and sound, seating space for 100 to 150 people, and equipment. It would be possible, if we had enough space, to outline most of the specific needs, but the best way of testing is to make a trial set-up in the room and make your own estimate of how the various problems can be solved.

The lights are usually reflector-type bulbs housed in stovepipes blackened inside with flat-black glytal paint (or blackboard paint). The flood-type bulb is the one used at the usual short ranges, and most theatres use the 150-watt size. You need a dozen of these, at the



Scene from *Kind Lady* presented as an arena production by dramatics students of the Abilene, Texas, High School (Thespian Troupe 353). Directed by Ernest Sublett.

minimum, and since you must have them made for you or adapted to your use they will probably cost less than \$10 apiece including all materials and labor. This is one of the major investments needed, and I would not ordinarily recommend trying to do an arena production without these light weight units. We do use a few ordinary Fresnel spots and an occasional Lekolite for a special purpose, but we have found nothing that seems to be as good as these, the cheapest acting-area lights you can get. Designs for our lights may be obtained from the Penn State Extension Service, or the units sold by Communications, Inc. (Seattle, Washington) may be adapted by adding the stovepipe.

When you think you have found a possible place, take one of these reflector bulbs on a long extension cord when you make your trial set-up. Now proceed as follows . . . mark off on the floor the area covered by the carpet that is to be your stage. Should be about 16x20, and cannot reasonably be less than 12 by 15. Around this central stage, mark off a four-foot border of "no-man's land." Now place two, three, or four rows of seats around this border, leaving aisles where they are needed, both for stage entrances and for access to the seats. If you are working on a flat floor, you should not plan to use more than three rows of chairs, and two would be better.

There you are! Now let's test it. First, can you find a location near the fuse box for your control panel? This may be a simple three-fold screen with a window of copper screening in it, concealing switchboard, sound equipment, stage manager and operators. You do need a few dimmers, for you must control the house lights and stage lights from this control booth. A dimmer, with a fuse in series can be plugged directly into the fuse panel, and this is the usual method.

Can you find a way of suspending your lights in the proper position?

They should be about 13-15 feet above the first row of seats, but the principle here has not changed. Light should strike the actor's face at an angle of 45 degrees, more or less . . . and should never be allowed to strike one of the front row seats. Get out your extension cord and your reflector-flood bulb and experiment a bit. If there is a balcony behind the audience you might try using reflector-spots from there, but the main problem does not change . . . light the actor but not the audience. There is only one new principle in arena lighting . . . light every area with light from opposed directions. That means two or more lights to each area of the stage. Twelve lights will barely cover a 16x20 stage.

Using these light-weight units ("tube lights") we hang light wood battens of 1x3, and suspend the lights from them. Screw-eyes in the ceiling joists are fully adequate for this amount of weight. Ordinary theatre lights would require something rather more sturdy.

Let us proceed with our testing. Turn out the house lights. (Note how many switches were involved in the process. It is not necessary that all these circuits be dimmed . . . we use a switch on one circuit and dimmers to

carry the load from there down to blackout.) Can you get a complete blackout? The curtains may need to be drawn, or you may find that the war-time blackout screens are still in existence. Matinees and even shows given in the early evenings of spring make the blackout problem difficult.

In the blackout your actors must enter the stage. Where will they come from? Will you need more entrances for the stage than you have for the auditorium? In this case, a "covered runway" may be constructed of screens running along one side of the auditorium, behind which the actor can walk unseen. To reduce noise, this should be carpeted, like the stage and entrance aisles.

Can your light and sound operators see the stage from the control booth position? The sound of actors entering is usually covered by the music of the overture, and the lights brought up quickly at the end of the record, but in other theatres some slight sound is used to warn the switchboard operator when the actors are ready to be revealed. A very simple and effective cue to the operator was used on SKYLARK where an actor lighting a cigarette served as the cue for bringing up the lights. Candles would suggest a similar technique.

What about the end of the act? We often guide actors off the darkened stage by giving them a tiny guide light, near the door they are to use. Often this is the duty of a prop girl, to open the auditorium door and shine a pen-light on the floor. This light is usually so faint that the audience doesn't see it at all.

Now, the house lights would be turned on again, and perhaps you will have an intermission? Then the actors will have to get out of sight quickly. Where are they to go? Can they adjust their make-ups? Who will warn them for the next act? Will the property crew be able to make their changes without trouble? I remember seeing a girl with an enormous moose-head trying to make her way up the aisle against a stream of people. It was funnier than some of the intentional business in *Room Service*! The movement of furniture must be thought out carefully and aisles checked for adequate width if beds and sofas are to be changed. Tea-wagons and baskets are very useful tools for crew members handling small props, but the real secret of fast changes is still the same . . . it is the planning of work so that no person is ever idle, and no trip is made with empty hands.

The Plan

Now suppose that you have figured out all the real problems of both play and place . . . what is your plan of operation to be?

You should plan to give one or two productions a week for a period of four to eight weeks. Does that sound like a big order? You will find that it is, too. But you should plan on it, and do it. To do two performances of an arena play is ridiculous. Your royalty quotation will be too high per performance, and if it is a good play you will be unable to accommodate your usual audience in two houses of only

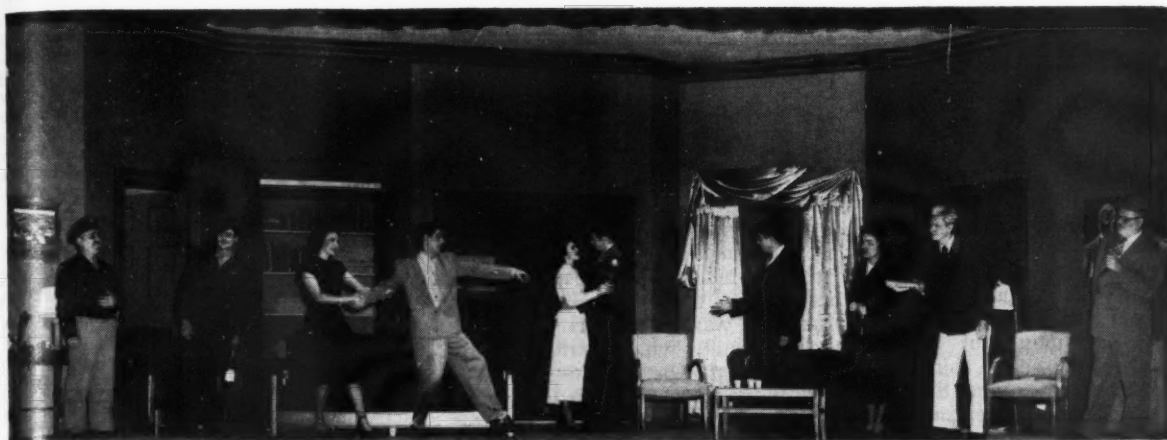
125 people. No, the small intimate theatre needs to run for a longer time. In doing so it can attract a larger audience, provide more experience for your actors and managers, and you will end up with a smoother performance than you had imagined possible. Better face the inevitable before you begin. Take a long breath and plan a play to run for a month or two. It will, depend upon it.

The Public

Remember that your audience is unused to a theatre that plays week after week, but can accommodate only a few people at a time. You must prepare them by publicity. And you *must* remember that the publicity job is not over on the night of production, as it used to be. If you are running your plays six weeks, the publicity job is one that lasts for a couple of months. There is the *preliminary campaign*, when you take advantage of the novelty of the method. Then the *opening drive* which should quickly sell out your first few houses. And then there is the mid-week problem every week that you play, when you remind the public that you are still running, or warn them that there are only two more weeks to see it. This is the *weekly tickler*. Your aim should be to have the house sold out the day before it opens. And it is not very difficult to do, although it sounds very impressive when I say that *Hotel Universe* ran for three months to capacity audiences. So it did, but it was only once a week in those days, and it played to less than 1500 people in all that time.

The other serious problem about the public, is your crew for the front-of-the-house. You need trained ushers, efficient and courteous. The box office should be swift and expert. Suddenly you will discover the difference between running a theatre and giving a play. Now you need people who are more interested in public relations and management than they are in the play itself. This end of your theatre should be smoothly professional when it is first seen. Enlist the help of the home economics teacher if you serve intermission coffee in the lobby, and let the commercial department provide you with a box office system. Use the best hotels, restaurants, and movie theatres as models for your relations with the public. This is a small theatre, and you can run it right! If you do, there will be just as valuable training in this end of your theatre as in acting or crew work, and in a more remunerative field!

Now there you are, running a theatre once a week for six weeks. You and your students will find curious comfort in a steady rhythm, instead of the nervous rush and explosion of the occasional performance. It discourages temper and temperament, and puts a premium on dependability. The actors discover how to *play* a show, usually all they really learn is how to *rehearse* it. You find out about the second week letdown, and the fifth week staleness. And then people begin to ask 'when are you going to change the bill?' and 'what are you going to play next?' Well? Why not? There are five or six days to rehearse in every week you play. Why not play *continuously*?



This comedy scene is from **John Loves Mary** staged by members of Troupe 435 of the San Pedro, Calif., High School, Robert I. Rivera directed this successful show.

The Director's Place in the Theatre

By TALBOT PEARSON

Director, Stage, Inc., New Orleans, La.

THE director of a play is often likened to the conductor of an orchestra. It is true that there are certain obvious parallels in their functions as coordinators of a performance. Like the conductor, the play director has to control speed, tempo, dynamics and balance; he is supposed to exercise almost dictatorial influence over the production.

The differences are a great deal more obvious than the similarities in the functions of the two officials. The play director has responsibilities far wider than the conductor and he has to allow the performance to go on finally, without being able to control slight deviations or lapses from his rehearsed conception. Beyond seeing that all the members of the orchestra wear correct evening dress and have their music stands adequately lighted, the conductor has no concern with the visual side of performance. Orchestras play to be heard, not to be seen. The play director must watch the décor, the settings, the costumes and the lights, exercising careful supervision over these departments throughout the rehearsals and then sitting out in front for the first performance and hoping that all will go well.

All this adds up to a need for the most detailed and careful planning during the rehearsal period. The director will expect to have a staff of experts in their own departments—scene design, lighting, costumes and so on—but on him falls the ultimate responsibility for the entire production emerging as a unified whole and not a hodge-podge of individual efforts.

Few members of an audience will remember the name of the man (or woman) whose name appears on the program as having directed or staged the play. Still fewer are conscious of the

contribution which the director has made to their enjoyment or, conversely, how much he may have detracted from it. There are quite a few plays produced in New York each year which *might* have had a better critical reception if they had been better directed. The same is true, alas, of many productions off-Broadway.

The intellectually honest director will admit that no director (including himself) can be better than his actors. The making of bricks without straw is still impossible in any field of endeavor. The best director in the world cannot stage a well-paced, imaginative, cohesive production without actors who know their business and are cooperative and generous in their feeling for teamwork. To revert to the parallel between directors and conductors, a Toscanini can make a high school orchestra sound better than it did under a student conductor but when the maestro mounts the podium at Carnegie Hall he faces an orchestra of carefully picked specialists, the top players available in the country. And the symphony sounds just that much better in consequence.

Casting of the play, therefore, by the director himself is the first requirement for a successful production. Directors may sometimes make mistakes, but as a rule they don't allow personal considerations to weigh with them; they know how much is going to depend upon the right choice for each part. They will try to collect a cast who may be expected to work well together. If it is a high school or college cast, there should be no deadly rivalries or

off-stage attachments to affect the selection of the romantic teams.

Once the cast is selected, the play is read. No two directors follow the same procedure here. Some insist upon reading the whole play themselves to the assembled players, others pass around the parts and have the actors read as their cues arrive. The former method is really preferable, since the director is supposed to have already mastered the content of the play and comprehended the characterizations. Some directors are fine actors (Bernard Shaw, for one) and can play all the parts in differing style and voice quality, while others merely read the lines for their value to the story. But one way or the other at this point in the rehearsal procedure, the director puts his stamp firmly on the play for good or ill. It is here that he must exhibit his grasp on the script and its dramatic values and it is at this point that he must assert his command of the cast.

Movement comes next. Again there are differences of opinion as to the best way to control this. Bernard Shaw insists that at the first rehearsal (after the play has been "read") the director must come with the stage business thoroughly studied, with every movement, every placing of hat or gloves, settled for instant dictation. He believes that failure to do this weakens the confidence of the cast in their leader and that improvisation at the expense of the players' time is wasteful and wicked. There is much to be said for such an autocratic approach.

Many other capable and successful directors find this advice too cut-and-dried and not calculated to evoke the best in the players' imaginative powers. It is certainly an axiom in the theatre that certain pieces of "business" are highly personal; one actor can handle a cape or a train in a manner that would look foolish when done by someone else. And that someone else can probably be made to seem equally effective with a totally different move or gesture. This is especially true of non-professionals and of practically all save the highly skilled few. This is not to plead that the attempt should not be made, but it is the wise director who tailors the stage business and movement to the capacities of the player and

Professor Pearson presents in this issue of **DRAMATICS** his fifth of a series of articles on "Theatre Enjoyment." The two remaining articles will appear in our April and May issues.—EDITOR

does not insist arbitrarily upon some move or gesture beyond that player's ability. In time, it is to be hoped, that same player will grow more skilled; meanwhile compromise must be the rule.

Certain directors make their work clearly recognizable by their approach. Elia Kazan, for instance, always turns out a production which is tremendously exciting and almost frenetic in its movement. There is always something happening and there is an electric quality in the air. Now Mr. Kazan may know exactly what he wants (as Mr. Shaw advises) from the beginning, but he has been known to let his actors think they are inventing the moves and the business and for the first few rehearsals in the "blocking" process he is right in there among them, exhorting and encouraging and creating excitement. Guthrie McClintic is more quiet and intellectual in his approach; Herman Shumlin (he did *The Little Foxes* among others) believes that the director should be opportunist in his readiness to take advantage of each little dramatic value that presents itself as the rehearsal proceeds.

It is painful to have to report that there are quite a few directors, on Broadway and off, who conceive of themselves as little more than traffic cops and provided no one bumps into anyone else, can be seen and heard at all times, they worry little about anything else. Tempo, rhythm, pace, pictorial values are all too esoteric to concern them at all.

It is obviously impossible to abide by a set of rules for the directing of a play, even when they are proposed by Bernard Shaw. But I have never found any director who will disagree with one of Shaw's dicta concerning the amount of "direction" (that is, interruption) that should occur. Of course he is not thinking, when he lays down these rules, of the high school or college director but of the experienced professional. Yet his advice might well be followed by each and every one who tackles a production from the front.

Briefly he argues for a maximum of dictation at the beginning and the minimum at the end. He believes (and I, for one, am in complete agreement) that actors must be allowed to work things out; they will only be fussed, confused and resentful at constant advice or correction every few minutes. Shaw's method, and that of most of my fellow-directors, is to give all the detail at the beginning that is consonant with a proper understanding of the role and its possibilities, to spend the first few rehearsals on each act in gaining smoothness in business and gesture and then, at the first possible moment, to let the play run through. The director then becomes a critic, not a coach; he makes copious notes which he discusses with the players, collectively and individually, at the end of each act.

As time goes on, if the cast is co-operative and the director knowledgeable, these notes become fewer and fewer and the ideal situation has arrived when the final dress rehearsal produces no more than a few brief suggestions

about costumes. I repeat, that is the ideal situation, not the usual. But it is surprising how nearly it may be achieved in almost any kind of production, if the director is eagle-eyed, has a true ear and a rapid pencil.

The title, as well as the specific duties, of the "director" belongs to the modern theatre. There have been managers since the days when Thespis contracted to present plays at the Greek festivals and transported scenery, costumes and actors to the hillside arenas. While Shakespeare was the owner of shares in the companies which performed his plays, we cannot be sure that the rehearsals were always conducted under his supervision. There was Burbage, the actor-manager, to be considered and his views as the player of the leading roles must have been of considerable weight.

Stage managers, not concerned with the business of the production but the "business" of the stage, have always been necessary. These are the men who held the prompt book, called the actors, signalled the fall of the curtain and generally acted as traffic policemen. They kept the performance moving, suggested bits of action and as their title suggests, managed the stage. But they were not directors as the term is used today.

Theatre historians credit George II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, with the creation of the role of the director when he freed the German stage of his day from the absurdity of solo acting in dead center, down at the footlights,

and when he introduced the collective personality of the group. To do this, over what must have been determined opposition from the nineteenth century stars suddenly deprived of their overwhelming importance, took great determination and the utmost firmness. The duke was his own producer, which may have helped, but the results he achieved completely altered the style of playing and exalted the functions of the director to very sudden importance.

In addition to redressing the balance between the players in the cast, Saxe-Meiningen made great improvements in the style of staging. Prior to his day the nineteenth century theatre had paid no attention to scenery or costumes. From the great days of the seventeenth and eighteenth, with their elaborate settings and rich costuming, the European stage had deteriorated to the point where the sets were perennially shabby and the costumes looked like the contents of the rag-bag. There was no attempt at historical accuracy in either department. The earlier periods had not always provided historical authenticity in costume or staging but at least they had appealed to the eye of the beholder and stimulated his imagination.

From the discreet control over all the departments of production which Saxe-Meiningen exercised came the more autocratic and vividly personal attitudes of such men as Max Reinhardt and Adolph Appia. The latter made his name as the interpreter, in staging, of Richard Wagner and no one has perhaps understood the scenic requirements of the great music-dramas as well as this mystic director.

Later names such as Meyerhold and Piscator have carried the autocratic tradition even further than Reinhardt, for while the man who is best known in this country for his productions of *THE MIRACLE* and *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* controlled his players with an iron hand and coordinated all departments, he veritably created actors and actresses and developed their strong points. Most of his imitators have only succeeded in manipulating human puppets in front of a background, beautiful in itself but of little value without the forefront of inspired acting.

For in spite of his responsibility for the manifold details of modern stage production, the director stands or falls by the quality of the acting performance. From the "down front and center" style of the early nineteenth century to the puppet-like productions of the dictator-director was a broad jump. The actor survived it and is now re-asserting himself as a partner with and not merely a slave to the director. Particularly is this true in America where dictatorship is not too highly valued, and it is the wise and canny director who can take advantage of the individualistic actor, exploit his or her creative abilities and yet manage unobtrusively to impose his will upon the most capricious performers in order to achieve the desired results. Direction is never so effective as when it is unobtrusive and never so noticeable as when it is not perceptible either to actors or to audience.

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1706 South Prairie Avenue

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THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library
New York 18, N. Y.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Requests should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

IN looking over a set of recent reviews which were written for these pages I became aware that a certain depression seemed to have taken hold of my attitude. It was no doubt partially induced by disappointment over one after another theatre fiasco. So many of this season's productions looked so wonderful in prospect and so poorly in retrospect. I always feel, however, that even when forced to inveigh against an offering my words should have about them something of my joy at just being in the theatre. Even when the play is poor, the acting mediocre and the theatre overheated—I'm glad I'm at the theatre. I shall guard against over-dependency in the future!

This bit of self-analysis may be induced by the present glow of theatrical events. Several of the new plays have been extremely fine and the poor ones not quite as bad as some of their faltering predecessors. Yesterday, too, an event took place which is most joyful. The American National Theatre and Academy (about which no word of explanation is necessary, I feel sure) acquired the Guild Theatre in New York. Coming, as it does, so much upon the heels of the acquisition by ANTA of the Belasco Theatre in Washington, D. C.; makes the purchase still more noteworthy. Thus, ANTA has a permanent home in both the national capital of the United States and in the theatre capital of the United States. The Guild Theatre was for almost a score of years the headquarters of the Theatre Guild. It has been called by many, "The House That Shaw Built" since it was by means of the Theatre Guild's successful Shavian productions that the edifice was made possible. In addition to serving as headquarters for our national theatre organization, the theatre will afford a place for the Experimental Theatre, the Equity-Library Theatre and so many other important activities. This is an event worth heralding!

In last month's article, news was given of the advent of the New York City Theatre Company. This was the troupe which was to provide a series of plays at the municipal theatre and to be under the direction of Maurice Evans. Three of the four scheduled plays have been performed and a most enviable standard has been set. Two seasons ago, under the direction of Jose Ferrer, an attempt was made to set up a permanent company at the City Center of Music and Drama. The results were disappointing both from the plays selected and the production themselves. Since then, those in charge of providing dramatic fare for the municipal auditorium have seen

fit to book only return engagements of Broadway successes.

She Stoops to Conquer

The current season opened just before the beginning of the new year with a revival of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. The delightful eighteenth century comedy had not been seen in a professional production in New York for too many years. It had been one of that great number of plays which most of us read in school and never have an opportunity to see performed. From the moment that Mr. Evans appeared to speak a 20th century prologue until all of the "mistakes of the night" (to employ Goldsmith's sub-title for the play) had been rectified, the production was pure delight. A sterling cast had been engaged: Cleste Holm, Brian Aherne, Ezra Stone, Burl Ives, Evelyn Varden, Staats Cotsworth and Carmen Mathews. Under the direction of Morton Da Costa, *She Stoops To Conquer*, launched the New York City Theatre Company handsomely.

The Corn Is Green

The second offering was a revival of a more recent play—Emlyn Williams' *The Corn Is Green*. Many of us cherished verdant memories of the earlier production in 1940 of this play when Ethel Barrymore appeared as Miss Moffat, the crusading teacher. Larger numbers of us had seen the film in which Bette Davis essayed the role. It was rather daring to essay so recent a success.

Eva Le Gallienne very wisely did not try to duplicate Miss Barrymore's performance. She made Miss Moffat a characterization of her own. It differed from Miss Barrymore's but was equally moving and genuine. Richard Waring, who played Morgan Evans in the first American production, appeared again in this role. The story is that of the struggle to establish a school for a village of Welsh miners. One discouragement after another almost forces Miss Moffat to abandon the project but she comes upon an essay written by one of the youths. Feeling that the work shows unusual promise, Miss Moffat devotes herself untiringly to the lad until he is equal to an Oxford qualifying examination. Mr. Williams wrote the play as the partial expression of gratitude to a teacher who had done a great deal for him. It is, I believe, one of the most moving plays to have been produced in the recent theatre.

It was altogether fitting that Miss La Gallienne should have had a place in the roster of

the new company. It was she, you will recall, who established both the Civic Repertory Theatre (in the '20s) and the more recent American Repertory Theatre. Though both of these ventures are now part of our theatre history; without them we would never have arrived at a New York City Theatre Company.

The Devil's Disciple

The third item of the company (which will be reviewed in the next issue since it opened only last night) is George Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*. Here, again, is a play which has not been seen hereabouts for too long. Mr. Shaw's play revolves about the person of Benedict Arnold and his conspiracy against the United States. In this revival, Maurice Evans is playing Dick Dudgeon and Dennis King is enacting the role of General Burgoyne. Marsha Hunt and Victor Jory head the supporting cast which has been directed by Margaret Webster. The final play in the season will be a return engagement of *The Heiress* (the adaptation by Ruth and Augustus Goetz of Henry James' *Washington Square*.) Basil Rathbone and Margaret Phillips will play the leading roles for the New York City Theatre Company.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

One of the town's outstanding musicals is *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*—a far from gentle lampoon of the mores of the twenties. The book for the production has been fashioned by Joseph Fields and Anita Loos from Miss Loos' famous novel. Jule Styne has composed the music; Leo Robin the lyrics. For over a year a certain nostalgia for the halcyon period of twenty-five years ago has been expressed with increasing regularity. That gay revue from the West Coast, *Lend An Ear*, contained several bows to this yearning. Two of the stars from that revue, Carol Channing and Yvonne Arair, have come over into *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

Both ladies are definite assests to any production but to Miss Channing go most of the plums of the new musical. Her rendition of "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend" is superb. It is, more or less, the theme of the production. Those of us who recall the period, remember that the term "gold-digger" was not solely applied to those hardy souls who scratched the hard Alaskan terrain. It was used to describe a certain rather prevalent type of female, and of these Lorelei Lee (the role played by Miss Channing) is the prototype. The plot of the musical relates how Miss Lee gets from Little Rock to Paris and how she employs her very materialistic philosophy. Lorelei, by the way, becomes the second of the musical comedy heroines to glorify the Arkansas metropolis. Nellie Forbush, the nurse of SOUTH PACIFIC, is also a resident of "Small Rock," as Emile de Becque calls it in the aforementioned work.

A large part of the attraction about *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is the gentle nostalgia for people and places of our recent history. The opening takes place at a midnight sailing of the Ile de France and moves from there to Paris. The final scene is set at the famed Cen-



Scene from the Broadway production of *Caesar & Cleopatra* which opened at the National Theatre on December 20, 1949. (Left to right): Lilli Palmer as Cleopatra, Cedric Hardwicke as Caesar, Ralph Forbes as Rufio, Arthur Treacher as Britannus, and Danny Harris as Ptolemy.

tral Park Casino in New York—the scene of some of the world's gayest pre-depression parties. It is the third day of the celebration of the wedding of Lorelei and Gus. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is a "whiz"!

Lost in the Stars

A very definite musical has been fashioned by Maxwell Anderson from Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, the novel of racial strife and poverty in South Africa. With a score by Kurt Weill, *Lost in the Stars* stands as one of the top productions of the season. It is not a musical in the most commonly used sense of the word. It is closer to opera than to musical comedy. Indeed, it has long been my contention that such works as *Porgy and Bess*, the musical setting of *Street Scene* and *Lost in the Stars* are as close to the operatic form as American talents will approach. Those responsible for the work under examination label it "a musical tragedy." Perhaps that is the definition to which we should adhere.

The principal figures of the work are the Rev. Stephan Kumalo, the native minister; his wife and son; James Jarvis, the English gentleman and his family. The rift between the two families is bridged only by tragic loss—the murder of Jarvis' son by Rev. Kumalo's son. This, however, is only the main thread of the plot. A large section of the underlying currents of South African (and world) society is exposed through the course of the opera. It is a masterful job. The difficulties in adapting Paton's book seemed almost insurmountable but it has been done and nothing seems to be lacking. Much of the credit must go to Rouben Mamoulian, who directed and supervised the production. Todd Duncan and Leslie Banks play the two fathers most feelingly. *LOST IN THE STARS* is one of the current theatre's great treats.

The Cocktail Party

One of the most interesting and unusual plays to have shown here this season is T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*. First performed last summer at the festival in Edinburgh, the play comes to us before even its London showing. It is

a difficult play—the kind of thing one wants to read and then see again and again. Perhaps this is a criticism of the play of an unfavorable nature. A writer for the stage should take into serious consideration the limitations of his medium of expression. The work must make its effect on first hearing upon an audience which has not been previously exposed to it. It would be too bad, however, to adhere over-rigidly to such a consideration. Much of Mr. Eliot's play was, to me at the first hearing, unintelligible. Some of it seemed intricate and too involved for effect. On the other hand, so much of it is brilliant and searching that it seems a very important play.

At the opening of the play we meet several of our contemporaries at a cocktail party. One of these is a psychiatrist—referred to in the playbill as "an unidentified guest." His effect on the other guests and upon the host and hostess is the action of *The Cocktail Party*. It is, however, the thoughts expressed by the characters in the play and those generated in the minds of the audience that is the chief importance of Eliot's play. It is one of the most provocative plays to have been done hereabouts in years. It will stir up no end of reflection and discussion and that is the proof of its importance.

After the preview of the play which we witnessed, I felt that it was too deep a play for wide popularity. The critical reception,

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however, has been so very favorable that the play seems assured of a successful run. It will prove again that the public will support a genuine play even if it is not mere entertainment. There is always room in the theatre for such a triumph as *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*, and we trust that Mr. Eliot (and other of the generally non-theatre writers) will be encouraged by its success to create further works for the stage.

The play has not, as yet, been published in this country. I hope it soon will be. Arrangements have been concluded with Decca to record much of the play with the cast now playing it at the Henry Miller Theatre. This will enable everyone to enjoy Eliot's superb dialogue. I hope, after further study of the play and at least one more seeing, to return to a discussion of *The Cocktail Party* in these pages.

The Member of the Wedding

Another of New York's interesting new plays is Carson McCullers' dramatization of her own novel, *The Member of the Wedding*. It is as sensitive a portrayal of childhood and early adolescence as the recent stage has boasted. The chief characters are Frankie Adams, a twelve-year old; her young cousin, John Henry West and Berenice Sadie Brown, the aging household servant. The action pivots around the crises in the life of Frankie created by the marriage of her brother, the death of John Henry and her separation from Berenice. As character studies, the almost isolated scenes of *The Member of the Wedding* are brilliant. At times, however, one feels that there is really no play in the situation.

Abetted by a flawless production, the script takes on an almost magical charm. Certain scenes remain in memory long after one has left the theatre. Ethel Waters as Berenice creates many such memories. Julie Harris as Frankie seems just the girl Miss McCullers must have had in mind. Brandon de Wilde is magnificent as young John Henry . . . a genuine child, not merely a precocious stage youngster. Under the direction of Harold Clurman a very fragile play takes on real theatre brilliancy.

Latest Arrivals on Broadway

As I write, Katherine Hepburn is opening in New York as Rosalind in a Theatre Guild revival of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Rodgers and Hammerstein's production of *The Happy Time* has opened earlier in the week. Next Sunday evening, the *Ana Album of 1950*, the tremendous special production for the benefit of the American National Theatre and Academy will take place. Among the high spots this year will be Ethel Barrymore in Barrie's *The Twelve Pound Look*, Jack Benny in *The Still Alarm*, great choruses from all the current Broadway musicals and scores of theatre people in great scenes from past successes. Soon after, *The Innocents*—adapted from James' *The Turn of the Screw*—will make its local bow. This theatregoing really makes for an exciting and a full existence!

THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL
Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,
Los Angeles, California

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1949-50 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

ADAM'S RIB

THIS is the season when columnists and pollsters across the country make their annual nominations for the "best" films of the year just past. As this is being written, voting is under way for the traditional climax, the Academy Awards in March. Listings of box-office grosses in the trade journals make it a comparatively simple task to determine the popular films of 1949; the selecting of those of greatest merit is scarcely made easier by the few weeks of perspective granted since January 1.

Documentary Techniques

The year is notable for the extended application of documentary film techniques to fictional work. The bold strokes of *All the King's Men*, a vigorous portrayal of a demagogue, and the polished story-telling of *Intruder in the Dust*, a story of race discrimination, carried exceptional conviction through skillful use of "on-the-spot" photography. By way of contrast, the more conventional treatments given *The Red Menace* and *I Married A Communist* served to underscore the difficulty of turning imposing ideological argument into moving drama. The personal conflicts in the first two films were strengthened by the immediacy projected by a camera that moves within a "real" rather than a "studio" environment; the latter two were made to appear melodramatic and even inconsequential by comparison.

This sense of immediacy was nowhere better projected than in the Italian-made *Bicycle Thief* and the eastern-made *Quiet One*. One is tempted to wonder whether the "gloss" usually identified with Hollywood products is not frequently the omission of convincing visual patterns that easily come within the range of the "on-the-spot" camera.

Discrimination and Imports

Intruder in the Dust was the fourth film within a year to deal directly or indirectly with discrimination against the Negro. *Home of the Brave* led off with an adaptation from the stage play; the central character, a Negro in the war, was as well drawn as the Jewish boy in the original. Then followed *Lost Boundaries*, the well told story of a colored doctor and his family who passed for white, and *Pinky*, which concerned the return home of a sensitive southern girl who had "passed" in the North. There were maturity and honesty in each of these; seldom has the commer-

cial film so clearly demonstrated that it can be intelligently articulate as well as "entertaining."

Importations continued to include top pictures. *THE BICYCLE THIEF* had an artistic equal in *THE FALLEN IDOL* from England. That country also was responsible for two excellent satires, *PASSAGE TO PIMLICO* and *TIGHT LITTLE ISLAND*. France contributed several outstanding films — *MONSIEUR VINCENT*, *DEVIL IN THE FLESH*, *CESAR*, and *THE CHIPS ARE DOWN* — definitely not for young immature audiences. Sparked by the experiences of war in Europe came *PAISAN*, *GEAMANY*, *YEAR ZERO*; and *THE LAST STOP*.

War and Miscellany

Many Hollywood writers were certain that within two years after hostilities nominally ended, war scripts would find no market. Certainly the word got around that studios weren't interested in war stories. Perhaps producers simply were overstocked, for the past year witnessed the release of several major World War II epics. Thorough, and at times tremendously exciting, productions were given *Task Force*, *Battleground*, *Twelve O'Clock High*, and *Sands of Iwo Jima*. Others, spearheaded by *Back to Bataan*, are scheduled for periodic release during 1950.

Hollywood productions of period pieces were not outstanding, although *The Heiress* achieved some distinction. *On the Town* won generous praise for setting a new record for smartness in film musicals. And the return of Rogers and Astaire in *The Barkleys of Broadway* received orchids in the "sentiment" brackets.

Bridging 1949 and 1950, and receiving general release during the current month, is an assortment of interesting fare: *IT'S A SMALL WORLD*, the story of a midget's trials and triumphs; *MRS. MIKE*, an adaptation from the popular book by the same title; *SAMSON AND DELILAH*, DeMille's latest spectacle; *DANCING IN THE DARK*, from the stage hit; *FRANCIS*, an astonishing tale of a talking Army mule; *THAT FORSYTE WOMAN*, based on the first book of Galsworthy's *FORSYTE SAGA*; and *ADAM'S RIB*, one of the funniest comedies to reach the screen since *IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT* and *WOMAN OF THE YEAR*.

Adam's Rib

Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn are supported in this new MGM comedy by a quartet of players well known on Broadway, and already in demand for further picture assignments. The skillful Tracy-and-Hepburn team are matched in comic agility by Tom Ewell and Judy Holliday, and are given a run for their money by Jean Hagen and David Wayne.

Broadway Players

Ewell, who has appeared briefly on the stage on the West coast, is a familiar figure in New York. From *Brother Rat* to *John Loves Mary* he has won a secure niche in character comedy. Judy Holliday playing his wife, won New York with her appearance in the long-run show, *Born Yesterday*. Her screen work is at the same high level of performance. Jean Hagen, once an understudy to Judy Holliday, scored on her own in *The Traitor*; in *Adam's Rib* she's "the other woman." David Wayne, who is "the other man" in the Tracy-Hepburn alliance, was the leprechaun of *Finian's Rainbow* and, for a time, the fresh lieutenant in *Mister Roberts*.

George Cukor, who directed, is happy with his Babes from Broadway, and well he might be. The new faces of skilled stage actors are a refreshing sight in the shadow theatre. Cukor's sound direction of *Adam's Rib* follows other capable jobs — *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Women*, *A Double Life*, and *Edward, My Son*.

Story Slight

The opening of the story is just credible enough to lead an audience into suspecting that they have stepped into the wrong theatre: a woman (Holliday) is tracking a man (Ewell) through the New York crowds at closing time. Outside the man's apartment she draws a revolver from her purse. Then, confused, she extracts an instruction book on the gun's operation. From this point on, the audience is reassured, and laughter follows laughter in waves — in such proportions that dialogue is frequently obscured.

The story-line is conventional enough. The woman proves to be a Doris Attinger who, in defense of her home, has trailed her husband to the arms of a glamour-girl (Hagen) and excitedly, and uncertainly, has tried to kill him. To her defense comes Amanda Bonner (Hepburn), attorney; while for the prosecution appears Adam Bonner (Tracy), her husband and deputy district attorney. Amanda has seized this opportunity to prove her pet theory that women should have the same rights as men. Only a few weeks before, a gentleman who murdered the cad who broke up his home had been acquitted: Amanda pleads the same leniency for her client, a mere woman.

From this point on the story matters even less: the home scenes between the confident Amanda and her harassed husband; the scenes in court, in which Adam is regularly bested by his resourceful wife; their final decision to separate — following a jury's decision in favor of Amanda's client — and their sudden reconciliation.

Comedy Is All

What add up to a rare treat are the tongue-in-cheek characterizations, the deft pacing and other directorial touch-



Courtroom shenanigans. Judy Holliday, Tom Ewell and Jean Hagen are seen as the "eternal triangle" in the comedy, *Adam's Rib*. Directed by George Cukor for M.G.M.

es, the almost impromptu quality of the acting, and the sure timing of the comedy business.

Outstanding is a scene in which Amanda Bonner quizzes her client. Hepburn and her secretary are seen in the close foreground, while the accused woman (Judy Holliday) faces the camera. Miss Holliday, without benefit of props or camera tricks, quietly proceeds to convulse her audience. The camera angle does not even change during the scene. It doesn't have to; Miss Holliday is in command.

Equally rewarding is Ewell's testimony on the witness stand. Here is the accomplishment into a few moments the accumulation of years of experience in live theatre.

David Wayne hits his stride early in the film when the Bonners, following a dinner in their home, show home movies to their guests. The comedy comes off almost too well, for the script doesn't allow Wayne to clown as well again.

Many of the court sequences are casually absurd and relentlessly funny. Al-
painfully so — for laughter can hurt at times — is Tracy's final summary to the jury. Later, when the outraged prosecutor finds his wife in the arms of "the other man" and flourishes a gun at the pair, the sudden twist is so unexpected that audiences almost applaud the horseplay.

The reconciliation of Amanda and Adam is effected by Adam's resorting to woman's oldest weapon: tears. When Amanda discovers that it has all been a ruse, it is too late. But she cannot resist pointing out to Adam that there is very little difference between the sexes.

"Grace a Dieu mais il y a un peu au moins!" Adam grins.

"Which means?"

"Thank goodness for that little difference!" sighs Adam.

Co-authors Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon — husband and wife, but hardly competitors like Adam and Amanda — have matched the skill of their earlier joint screen effort, *A Double Life*. They are welcome to a third try.

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THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Northeastern State College,
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

Staging A SOUND OF HUNTING

(As produced by The Little Theater Players of West Virginia Institute of Technology.)

By CARL F. ZERKE

Director of Dramatics and Assistant Professor of English, West Virginia Institute of Technology, Montgomery, West Virginia.

A SOUND OF HUNTING, a play in three acts, by Harry Brown. One interior scene. All-male cast of twelve, costume modern American Army. Royalty, \$25.00 first performance, \$20.00 for each additional performance. Dramatic Publishing Company, 1706 S. Prairie Avenue, Chicago 16, Illinois.

Suitability

This play offers splendid opportunity in characterization for college or community theatres. A sprinkling of veterans in the cast will in all probability give the play added power. With the strong army language purged, the play might serve as a challenge to enterprising high school groups. For more mature groups the language can be left almost untouched. A friendly but pointed curtain speech "in character" will lessen the shock of the language for most of the audience. Before the first act has progressed very many minutes the audience will realize it is seeing the war in a much franker and truer version than Hollywood has so far produced. Harry Brown's dialogue has an authentic ring that will make anyone even remotely connected with the services smile in pleased recognition.

Plot

An American infantry squad has been detained for days in a bombed-out house in Cassino during the Italian campaign. On the day the entire regiment is to be relieved, one G. I. in the squad, Willie Small, is pinned down by German machine gun fire while on a patrol and is unable to return to the squad's headquarters. Against their captain's orders the other members of the squad attempt to rescue him—not because they have any affection for him but because they want to hold the squad together. Collucci, the squad's "goldbrick," finally goes out alone, fights his way to Small and brings back the news that Small is dead.

Casting

Because all the characters wear army "O.D." uniforms, it is extremely important that the actors be varied enough in build and voice to assist the audience in distinguishing the characters easily. One method is to cast Collucci first, then Coke, of contrasting build if possible, then Sergeant Mooney (big, preferably). The director can then finish the casting in the order he ranks the characters in importance, looking for the strongest actor in each case who also offers whatever physical contrast is needed.

The lead, Pvt. Dino Collucci, should

be capable of bitterness, sarcasm, irony and infinite scorn. Like Steinbeck's strange crew in *Tortilla Flat*, he must seem capable of dissolute acts and yet be thoroughly likeable. Coke, who is constantly chided for his nervousness, should be intense but not necessarily a hand-wringer. Sergeant Mooney closely approximates the traditional tough sergeant but the characterization need not stop there, of course. If Shapiro is loud and good humored, he serves as an excellent foil for Collucci's wailing and complaining. Sergeant Carter is thoughtful and deliberate. The other roles, while relatively small, are nearly all choice and can make real contributions to the total effect.

Directing

The director should stress at the first rehearsal that the play, though full of laughs, is *not* a comedy. At this point the sprinkling of veterans may help. Even more helpful may be a few copies of Bill Mauldin's *Up Front*. Once the cast studies the bearded, drooping, sagging figures of Willie and Joe, it will recognize the cartoons as the withering sarcasm of men who hate what they are forced to do—not the bubbling optimism of "Rover Boys." This brief perusal of *Up Front* for the West Virginia Institute of Technology production saved the director hours of explanation and suggestions for interpretation.

With those Mauldin impressions in mind, the Little Theatre Players "fought off" the laughs when too much laughter could lessen the grim tragedy of the war at the "place where the war got stuck."

Acts I and II, being rather long, need a brisk tempo with plenty of pertinent movement and business. Here the director is largely on his own because the script provides little beyond the actual lines. The military equipment called for in the script lends itself well to business. The characters can clean rifles, open rations, write "V" letters, fill canteens from jerrikan, drink from canteens, fold blankets and shelter-halves, put on or remove combat boots to rest feet, clean mud off shoes, etc. The briskness, of course, provides contrast for sudden moments of quiet. In Act III the scene between Sergeant Carter and Captain Trelawney, in which Trelawney berates his college chum for permitting insubordination, is effective when done quietly and earnestly. Collucci's announcement that Small is dead squelches the squad, but "stickiness" can be avoided by having Sergeant Mooney break the mood sharply with his line, "He

was a neat guy, anyway, etc." The war correspondent may not register with the audience short of gross exaggeration of his smug and pompous attitude.

Rehearsals

Off-the-campus work schedules of some of the actors in the Little Theater Players production made it necessary to make rehearsals relatively few but long (four or more hours each). Over a period of six weeks the cast met sixteen times besides the dress rehearsal. In addition to these meetings about fifteen one hour periods were spent on scenes in which two characters held the stage. Because the local National Guard unit was very cooperative, army equipment, including uniforms, was introduced into rehearsals as soon as lines were learned. Constant handling of the weapons made even non-veterans seem at home with their M-1's by the night of the first performance. In brief the rehearsal schedule included four "blocking" sessions, three for the introduction of business, three in which characterization was stressed, three for pace and three for general polish and technical details.

The dialogue is tricky to learn but must be known "cold" in order to do justice to Harry Brown's lines.

Stage Problems

The picture of the Broadway set is enough to frighten a director away, but a study of it reveals that much of the original can be omitted without great loss of atmosphere. The significant feature is, of course, the shell hole. In this production we had a box set except for the six foot opening for the hole. After erecting the flats on either side of the hole the stage crew built frames of two-by-four's across which they nailed chicken wire shaped to suggest a ragged hole. The edges of the hole were formed by newspapers dipped for an instant in a mixture of warm glue and water and placed over the chicken wire. The area above the hole was covered with pieces of old canvas. When the newspaper on the chicken wire was dry the entire set was painted to blend the constructed unit with the flats. The value of the thickness in the wall around the hole is obvious though canvas may possibly serve in place of newspapers. The pile of rubble in the hole was suggested by a plank built into the two-by-four-structure and draped with a shelter-half. This entire construction must be sturdy enough to withstand the constant climbing and jumping through the hole.

Behind the shell hole a broken stone wall serves as an effective masking agent. Behind the wall two four-foot flats represent the sky. The room appeared more confining and the masking was more effective with the rear wall running on an angle from upper right to down left. The actors kept a lookout away from the deeper end of the set. The door was moved from its place in the rear wall in the original set to the left wall in this



Scene from the production of **A Sound of Hunting** as staged at the West Virginia Institute of

production. The dominant reason for the move was that it vied with the hole for attention. A small quantity of actual brick fragments added realism, especially by sound under foot.

If an ROTC or National Guard unit is not close by, the military equipment may present a real problem. Ex-GI's will help on the clothing and incidental equipment. American Legion posts may also provide weapons. The police may be prevailed upon for a "Tommy gun," or a slight change of lines will make a rifle just as satisfactory.

Cracker jack boxes filled with crackers and candy can be disguised as K rations. Effective sounds of machine guns and explosions (mortar fire) are obtainable on Major Records and on Standard Radio Transcription records (also 78 R.P.M.). Two turntables with one speaker will make the third act sound effects easier to handle. Incidentally, recorded songs popular during the war help maintain the mood between acts. In this production a bit of "Lili Marlene" sung in German was used as the house lights dimmed for each act.

Lighting

In *A Sound of Hunting* careful lighting helps preserve the authenticity of the set as well as the mood of the play. Since the only actual source of light in the room is the shell hole, general lighting and specific illumination on acting areas must be unobtrusive. At the hole one 500-watt Fresnelite represented daylight streaming in, especially at the beginning of the play, early dawn. The sky flats were lighted by a single baby spot with a pale-blue gelatin. Three more 500-watt Fresnelites threw heavy blue light from a beam in the auditorium. These were off-set during part of the play by the three-color, three-circuit "striplights" used as foots. Three 400-watt baby spots on the beam lighted the fireplace area, the table and, as the day progressed, the area immediately in front of the shell hole. Additional front lighting, kept very low, was provided by two 500-watt Kleig lights located in the auditorium. Throughout the play the light was kept as low on the set as possible and no brighter at any time

than was necessary for comfortable visibility. All lights were controlled by transformer-type dimmers. No light plot is provided with the script but dimming

into a murky blue was found to make an effective closing scene.

Costuming

Though all the characters wear "O.D.'s," a little variety may be achieved by jackets, sweaters and wool knit caps. The captain, lieutenant, war correspondent and runner are all cleaner than the rest.

Make-up

If the hair is allowed to go uncut for at least three weeks the cast will look (and feel) more like Mauldin's characters. Real beards are not essential. This production used pine tobacco fastened with spirit gum. This effect seemed convincing to the audience. The weary, beaten look was obtained with dark lining colors. Necks and hands should be made to appear soiled.

Budget

Stage	\$15.00
Costumes (dry cleaning)	15.00
Make-up	5.00
Programs and posters	22.00
Royalty (3 performances)	65.00
Playbooks (14)	11.00
Sound Effect Records (3)	7.00
Miscellaneous	10.00
Total	\$150.00

April Issue: SEVENTEENTH SUMMER

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Mention Dramatics

The Radio Program of the Month

By SI MILLS

446 East 20th St., New York, 9, New York

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1949-50 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

"DRAGNET"

(National Broadcasting Company — 10:30 p. m. EST — Thursday.)



Si Mills

COMING to the radio this season for the first time as a sponsored program is *Dragnet*, a documentary show that is undoubtedly one of the finest dramatizations brought to the listening public. This stanza is dramatic without becoming melodramatic.

From the very beginning of a tense half hour, you are part of the proceedings. After the theme, a voice informs you that you are a police sergeant, that you have just been assigned to a case in which such-and-so has happened. From the outset, you are made part of the goings-on by a voice that reminds you of the speaker in the "March of Time" movies. The great difference is that this voice is more matter-of-fact, less commanding. Undoubtedly, matter-of-factness is what imparts such flavor to the entire show.

Having once been put into the role of a policeman, you are never taken from that role. Everything with which the listener comes in contact is gotten through the eyes of a police sergeant. Thus is a very essential unity achieved and maintained. What is just as important is the fact that the policemen around you are not the stylized kind usually found in books, movies, and plays, but rather the sort of people you might actually meet in the police profession.

The use of a narrator — the police sergeant through whose eyes you are looking and through whose ears you are hearing — helps to make the program move by taking you quickly but unhurriedly over what might easily be spots that would slow down the action of the story.

Do not get the idea, however, that there are any "quickies" pulled on the listener. He has seen everything pertinent to the case; and so by the time most of the show has gone by, the mystery is cleared up. The remainder of the thirty minutes, then, is more in the style of a detective story. You have witnessed the solution of the mystery and are now part of the chase. This is definitely not the sort of item in which the policeman must come back at the end and tell you how he did it.

When actor Jack Webb and producer Bill Rousseau first conceived the idea of doing a police documentary series

for radio, they realized that one of their most important tasks was to select a writer with a clear-cut documentary style, some experience with police work, and a healthy respect for "facts."

They feel, and listeners to NBC's DRAGNET appear to agree, that in scripter Jim Moser they have found the right man. Moser was for several years a police reporter for the San Francisco Examiner. In 1946, as a radio newswriter, he received the National Headliner Award for his thirty-two hour coverage of the attempted prison break from Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay.

Twenty-five pounds underweight, Moser probably couldn't pass the rigorous Police Department physical. However, he should be able to score high on any of the written or oral exams customarily given to rookie policemen. In his research for background material for *Dragnet* he has taken the training equivalent to that which a police officer receives during his three months indoctrination period.

Before *Dragnet* went on the air last June, Jim Moser joined star Jack Webb and producer Bill Rousseau in a comprehensive tour of the Los Angeles Police Department. This tour took them a full week. It included attending all classes taught at the Police Academy and visiting all departments of police

headquarters. They received detailed explanations of equipment used by the force, from the IBM machines used in statistical crime work to the Thompson sub-machine gun, called for on less theoretical occasions.

But their study didn't end there. Webb and Rousseau still make two monthly visits to the police department and spend many hours consulting with their technical advisors, Detective Sergeants Marty Wynn and Vance Brasher.

Moser, as the only script writer on the weekly documentary series, also doubles as researcher. Each DRAGNET episode is based on a different division of the Detective Bureau — i.e. Narcotics Detail, Juvenile Delinquency, Robbery, etc. Since each script describes the technical operation of the divisions, Moser must make a complete technical study of those details before beginning to write. For this reason he reads at least two books from the Police Department Technical Library each week. These have included texts on Ballistics, Police Procedure, the Penal Code of the State of California, etc.

Still, there are certain types of information which can't be found in books. To acquire this, Moser spends many hours each week at the Police Department. He consults with various officials, talks with detectives who are off duty, rides in prowler cars, and visits scenes of actual crimes. During their off-duty hours Wynn and Brasher often drive Moser around town in a radio car. They listen to police calls, then go to the scene. There Jim can hear the actual questioning of victims and occasionally witness the capture of a suspect. In this manner, Moser gleans a knowledge of how these officers of the law perform their duties, how they react to the situations in which they find themselves, how they work together, and how they feel toward their fellow officers and



(Left to right): Sgt. Vance Brasher (Los Angeles Police Department Technical Advisor), Barton Yarborough (Ben Romero) and Jack Webb (Joe Friday) examining criminal identification machine at the Los Angeles Police Headquarters.

their superiors. He also gets a pretty good idea of the way in which suspects, victims, and witnesses are likely to behave. While these people are seldom as glib as pictured in radio, film, and fiction, Moser encountered touches of drama and simple emotion which it would be almost impossible to describe without having seen them at first hand.

Although many writers have requested it, few have ever been granted permission to use actual case histories as bases for stories or dramas. Permission to do the *Dragnet* series was granted under the following provisions:

- (1) Only actual cases may be used and these must be presented factually. All cases must be adjudicated—that is, have been brought to trial and received judgment.
- (2) The Police Department must be presented as it actually operates, not in a more glamorous light.
- (3) Two specially appointed police advisors (Wynn and Brasher) must clear all technical details. They work closely with Police Department Public Relations.
- (4) All scripts must be passed on by the City Attorney.

Moser goes even further than is required by the above. He attempts to present all persons involved in the case in as realistic a manner as possible. This requires long hours of extra work. But it is work of the most fascinating sort. Other writers of detective drama have expressed envy of Moser and his opportunity to study human nature and write it as he sees it.

William B. Rousseau rightly says that "In producing *Dragnet* I feel that we are trail-blazing in a technique that has been neglected in dramatic radio. That is, the terse, documentary-type presentation of actual true-to-life stories. Radio plays lean heavily on highly-glamorized heroes, prototype background characters, and somewhat synthetic situations. I believe that a more realistic approach is the coming thing in radio, as well as in all other types of dramatic narration."

Obviously, this show believes in realism and wishes to justify use of the police department case histories, trying to portray the police and others involved in the *Dragnet* episodes in as accurate and factual a manner as possible. The writer, Jim Moser, and principals, Jack Webb, Barton Yarborough, and Raymond Burr, have spent many hours conversing with and observing police detectives. They've discarded and previously conceived notions about how these men should speak and act. They present the police detective as a hard-working, highly trained specialist, who captures law breakers by working with the team rather than through individual flashes of genius.

One of the first things done when a newcomer joins the cast is to instruct him to read his lines just as though he himself were doing the talking. Veteran radio actors are usually ac-

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"Jumpin' Jupiter" was presented by our senior class on March 24th and 25th. It made the BIGGEST HIT of any class play ever presented. I consider the play highly suitable for high school casts and I give it my highest recommendation... Guy P. Lucas, Principal, Crowley High School, Crowley, La.

"Many members of our audience sincerely congratulated us on the play, 'Jumpin' Jupiter.' It afforded a full evening of delightful entertainment."... Vera C. Delaney, Capon Bridge High School, W. Va.



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customed to portraying persons in certain occupations by traditional accents and grammatical habits. However, through his extensive research, Moser has become convinced that few truck drivers, for example, speak with the "Youse's" the "dees," "dems" and "doses" that have long been used to characterize them in fiction, film, and radio.

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Mention Dramatics

In fact, there's enough surprising material in these case histories, to more than compensate for any disadvantages incurred by sticking to the facts. In a recent *Dragnet* episode was pictured a judge bawling out the jury for an obviously careless decision on a robbery case. At least twenty letters of protest were received saying that no judge would ever speak to a jury like that; but in preparing the script, Moser had used the actual transcripts from the court records. These words were the judge's own.

The best part of this series is that, even though seen through police eyes, there is a minimum of preaching. When the program was concerned with the accidental killing of a youngster by a playmate, there was a perfect chance for a long sermon on the folly of parents giving a child some harmful gift — like a firearm. Instead, the sermon was telescoped into one terse sentence, and there were no lengthy speeches about right or wrong.

The one poor part of the show comes at the very end in the form of a verbal salute to a police officer and department. This ending is just a little out of tune with the rest of the show, but it is over very quickly. Certainly it is a small price to pay for excellent half hour that has just been presented.

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Mention Dramatics

On The High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with

The National Thespian Society

Bellefontaine, Ohio

BELLEFONTAINE High School (Thespian Troupe 100): *We Shook the Family Tree, Let's Make Up, Why I Am a Bachelor*. The study of stage lighting and make-up are among the subjects which are receiving attention at the meetings of the dramatics club this season. A number of students attended a performance of Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* staged by the Community Players of Bellefontaine. Marjorie Ramage is troupe sponsor and dramatics director.—*Pat Hale, Secretary*

Neenah, Wisc.

NEENAH High School (Thespian Troupe 103): *Tish*, (one-act play to be given during spring term). A number of students participated in the preparation of original radio programs with the best to be given over a local station in the spring. Helen Paulson is troupe sponsor.

Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

A. B. DAVIS High School (Thespian Troupe 114): *Smilin' Through, I Remember Mama, The Valiant*. Plans are being made for the presentation of several marionette numbers and short skits for the County Red Cross program to be given in the hospitals this spring. Through the use of wire recordings the voice and diction of many students are being studied. Dramatics students of this school attend at least one Broadway show a season. Dorothy Feaster is director of dramatics.—*Babette Schreer, Secretary*

Mt. Vernon, Ind.

MOUNT VERNON High School (Thespian Troupe 116): *Meet Me in St. Louis, booklovers, All Is Calm, The White Gypsy*. Freshman students interested in dramatics at this school are given special training in dramatics, with Thespian members in charge. These students are divided into several groups, each with a Thespian in charge. By the end of the season each freshman has acquired a knowledge of the dramatics organizations of the school, along with knowledge of stage techniques, diction, stagecraft, make-up, lights, etc. Thespians maintain a record of each student's activities, attitudes and interests. From this record, qualifications for Thespian membership are determined. This plan is working very successfully, with Catharine L. Howard in charge.—*Phil H. Hageman, Secretary*

NOTICE

By the time this issue of DRAMATICS reaches you, our new publication, **DIRECTORY OF PLAYS FOR ALL-WOMEN CASTS (1944-49)**, prepared by Prof. Wm. Ellis Jones of the Virginia Interment College, will be available at 60c per copy, remittance with order. This publication lists one-act and full-length plays for all-female casts published during 1944 through 1949. You will want a copy for your library.

Will be furnished free of charge this spring to all high schools affiliated with The National Thespian Society.

THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY
College Hill Station Cincinnati 24, O.

East St. Louis, Ill.

ST. TERESA'S Academy (Thespian Troupe 118): *Jenny Kissed Me, Come Let Us Adore Him*, operetta, amateur show. History of the theatre, study of scenery, lighting and make-up are among the subjects considered during meetings of the dramatics club. A number of students are active in the presentation of radio programs. Several theatre parties have been sponsored so far this season. Dramatics activities are under the direction of Sister Mary Pius, AD. P.P. S.—*Collen Moore, Secretary*

Wetumpka, Ala.

WETUMPKA High School (Thespian Troupe 125): *Magnificent Obsession*. Dramatics club programs are given to the study of stage productions, authors and their principal works. A formal Thespian initiation is being planned for spring, with sponsor Vivian Parsons in charge.—*Joan Fain, Secretary*

Kansas City, Kansas

WYANDOTTE High School Thespian Troupe 162): *Strictly Formal, Mother Is a Freshman, Years Ago, Little Match Girl* (an original adaptation). Thespians and other dramatics students furnish entertainment for many social groups and literary clubs in the community. The Dramatics Department offers five classes in dramatics. This school enjoys the unique record of producing as many as sixty one-act plays each season. William Knapp is head of the Dramatics Department and serves as sponsor for Thespian activities.—*Beverly Lester, Secretary*

Maryville, Tenn.

MARYVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 164): *A Date With Judy, Eastward in Eden*. Central staging, make-up, and play production techniques are being studied this season as part of the dramatics club program, with sponsor Eleanor Badgett in charge. A number of dramatics club students presented radio programs during the observance of American Education Week.—*Jerry Tedford, Secretary*

Morristown, N. J.

MORRISTOWN High School (Thespian Troupe 166): *Junior Miss, It's an Ill Wind, The Wedding, The Fourth Mrs. Phillips, The Still Alarm, Nobody Sleeps*. Play directing, casting, speech and diction are among the subjects which are receiving attention this season, with sponsor Margaret E. Eckman in charge. A large number of students attended a performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* staged by Drew Foresters in December.

Logan, W. Va.

LOGAN High School (Thespian Troupe 168): *No Moon Tonight, A Waltz Dream* (presented by the Glee Club). Dramatics students of this school present a one-act play each Sunday over Station WLOC. Broadcasts for October included *The Haunted Clothesline, Daughter of the Gods, The Transferred Ghost, and All Is Not Gold*, with Thespian sponsor Thelma Juergensmeyer in charge.

Bellevue, Ohio

CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 173): *The Divine Flora, A By-Line for St. Luke, Cornhusk Doll*. (Major production to be presented by seniors in the spring.) Special program presented in observance of Thanksgiving Day. Esther Schachtele is in charge of dramatics.—*Ruth Briehl, Secretary*

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honey in the hive. Mr. Maxwell immediately visions himself the future president of the United States. He starts campaigning like mad and the whole family's hobnobbing with the town's elite, much to the chagrin of son Wilbur who's irked by baths, manners, combs, and Arthur — the Coady's young son. Well, the Maxwells don't have time for their neighbors anymore, they're too busy. Finally comes the third act and the big election. The whole family is sitting around the radio, listening to the election returns. It finally dawns on them that Papa is losing the election and losing it badly. The Coadys then disown them, and Mr. Maxwell, friendless and humiliated informs the family they're moving to another town. The neighbors then start returning their borrowed goods, and it's over this stack of boxes, umbrellas, fishing tackle and everything else that the Maxwells realize that the real honey in everyones hive is his friends just like these—and they move back in.

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State College, Pa.

STATE COLLEGE High School (Thespian Troupe 175): *The Little Shepherd From Kingdom Come*. Make-up, directing, function of stage crews and acting are being studied this year by students in dramatics at this school. A number of dramatics students also participate in the weekly program given by the high school over the local radio station. Glenn A. Shaffer has charge of dramatics this season.—Ellen Maynard, Secretary

Williams, Ariz.

WILLIAMS High School (Thespian Troupe 199): *Great Caesar's Ghost*, *Sob Stuff*. Dramatics students are devoting their club meetings to the study of make-up and the presentation of plays. Marion Higham is in charge of dramatics.

Stambaugh, Mich.

STAMBAUGH TOWNSHIP High School (Thespian Troupe 215): *Seventeenth Summer*. Activities sponsored during meetings of the dramatics club include study of make-up, voice production, presentation of cuttings from plays, and reports based upon the lives of well-known actors. The dramatics program at this school is under the direction of Helen Dunham.

Willoughby, Ohio

WILLOUGHBY High School (Thespian Troupe 220): *The Castle of Mr. Simpson*, *The Reader*, *Down in the Valley*. Two three-act plays will be presented later this season, with Mrs. Florine Carrol directing.—Jean Wood, Secretary

Fort Madison, Iowa

FORT MADISON High School (Thespian Troupe 229): *June Mad*, *A Modern Thanksgiving*. Dramatics students under the direction of sponsor Pearl E. Bagenstos gave a one hour radio program on December 10.—Barbara Grey, Secretary

Ravenswood, W. Va.

RAVENSWOOD High School (Thespian Troupe 253): *Brainstorm*, *Dad Trims the Tree*, football original burlesque. Elinore S. Hutchinson has charge of dramatics and Thespian activities this season.—Eddie Critchfield, Secretary

Fall River, Mass.

B. M. C. DURFEE High School (Thespian Troupe 254): *The Little Princes*, *Oui Oui Lili*, *The Senator From Vermont*, *The Weeds*, *Let Frankie Be*. An interesting program of activities in playwriting, stage settings,

directing and play production is being sponsored this season in connection with the dramatics club meetings. Plans are now being made for participation in the Massachusetts Drama Festival to be held in April. *Let Frankie Be*, an original play, was given over local station AWLE. National Thespian Director Barbara Wellington has charge of dramatics at this school.—Barbara K. Cohen, Secretary

Litchfield, Minn.

LITCHFIELD High School (Thespian Troupe 263): *The Whole Town's Talking* (two performances given early in November). F. G. Warta is in charge of dramatics activities.



This episode is from a production of the one-act play, *The Trysting Place*, as given at the Sunnyside, Wash., High School (Thespian Troupe 492), with Ruth Frasier as director. (Left to right): Delva Jean Packer, Lafry Thornton, Theresa Russell, and Carol Trudgeon.



Scene from *I Remember Mama* as staged by students of the Spanish Fort, Utah, High School (Thespian Troupe 25). Directed by B. Davis Evans and Pat Henderson.

Birmingham, Ala.

ENSLEY High School (Thespian Troupe 258): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *The Story of Dean Hawkins*, *Three's a Crowd*, *Undertow*, *The New Outlook* (original play), *Meet Arizona*, *Tops is Not Enough*. Several radio programs are being presented this season by dramatics students under the direction of Alabama Regional Director Florence Pass. Theatre photography, music in the theatre, and stage speech are among the subjects to which dramatics students are giving their attention this season.—Margaret Reece, Secretary

Boonville, Ind.

BOONVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 269): *The Hotel Minstrelles*, *The Intruder* was performed before several schools in the county during Fire Prevention Week. A number of dramatics students attended a performance given by the Tatterman Marionettes of Oxford, Ohio. Ravia Garrison directs theatre activities at this school.—Kathleen Gard, Secretary

Kirkland, Wash.

LAKE WASHINGTON High School (Thespian Troupe 274): *Rich Man, Poor Man*, *Submerged*. Thanksgiving Day Program, production of three-act play given by Thespians on December 22. Thespians exchanged a program with students of the Overlake High School on November 22. Marienne M. Cadle directs dramatics.—Virginia Hjelte, Secretary

Cumberland, Md.

FORT HILL High School (Thespian Troupe 230) *Junior Miss*, *Cinderella in Loreland*, play tournament, original May Day pageant. A study of the play as literature and the growth of a stage production are among the topics being studied by students. Two original radio skits were given this fall over a local station, with the choral speaking group participating. Under the supervision of troupe sponsor Helen S. Smith, a number of students are attending performances given by outside theatre groups.—Lois Davis, Secretary

Glenbard, Ill.

GLEN ELLYN High School (Thespian Troupe 233): *Kind Lady*, the Junior class play, will be presented in March under the direction of sponsor Rachel Whitfield. Several original radio skits have been presented this season. A number of students attend television and radio shows given in Chicago. An exchange program with nearby schools was also a feature of the fall term.—John Choyce, Secretary

Trenton, N. J.

CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 281): *I Remember Mama*, *Fright*, *Dickens' Christmas Carol*, *Of Mice and Men* (first act), *The Unicorn and the Fish*, *Moonshine*, *Where the Cross Is Made*. Current theatre productions and the making of masks are among the subjects to which dramatics students are giving

attention this season at their regular meetings. A number of dramatics students appeared in several radio programs during the fall term with sponsor Elizabeth Dillon in charge.

Postville, Iowa

POSTVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 294): *Uncle Fred Flits By*, *Moonshine*, Christmas program. Second major play of the season to be given early in May. Calendar also calls for the production of several one-acts during the spring term with sponsor Doris Allred in charge. Fourteen students were admitted to Thespian membership late in November.—Delores Erickson, Secretary

Hampton, Va.

HAMPTON High School (Thespian Troupe 300): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *Why the Chimes Rang*. Students saw college production of *The Little Foxes*, *The Women*, and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* during the fall term with Thespian sponsor W. C. Kramer in charge. Make-up, troupe business and problems pertaining to staff crews are among the subjects which are receiving consideration at the regular dramatics club meetings.

Staples, Minn.

STAPLES High School (Thespian Troupe 314): *Tiger House*, *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Wilbur Faces Facts*, Christmas pageant. Plans are now being made for a speech festival to be held in March. A number of worth while projects are receiving attention among dramatics students this season, with sponsor Mary Forsan in charge.—Babmy Stapher, Secretary

Dodge City, Kansas

DODGE CITY High School (Thespian Troupe 318): *A Date for Bobby Sox*, *Ladies of the Mop*, *Short of Murder*. The first major play of the season will be given by the Junior Class on February 14, with sponsor Dorothy M. Reynolds directing.

Watertown, S. Dak.

WATERTOWN High School (Thespian Troupe 330): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, Christmas program, Ki-Yi Kapers (vaudeville program). Junior Class three-act play to be given in March with title of play to be announced. Radio programs at this school are sponsored by the Microphone Workshop. Dramatics club meetings sponsor lectures and panel discussions dealing with stagecraft, make-up techniques, etc. Florence Bruhn directs dramatics activities at this school.—Peggy Johnson, Secretary

Amarillo, Texas

AMARILLO High School Thespian Troupe 335): *The Nine Lives of Emily*, *Who Gets the Car Tonight*, *Balcony Scene*, *Wild Hobby Horses*, *Goodnight, Carol*, *Why the Chimes Rang*. Thespian dramatics activities at this school are directed by Mrs. N. H. Whitworth.—Joan Houck, Secretary

Dallas, Texas

W. H. ADAMSON High School (Thespian Troupe 338): *Quit Your Kidding*, *For Whom the Telephone Rings*. Twenty-three students were awarded Thespian membership this fall, with sponsor W. G. Hedde in charge. Miss Hedde is Thespian Regional Director for the state of Texas.

Grand Ledge, Mich.

GRAND LEDGE High School (Thespian Troupe 356): Two performances of *Dulcy* were given by Thespians on November 17, 18, with sponsor Miriam Ellis directing.—Dema Root, Secretary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 10-12. Drama Festival, sponsored by the Alabama College Theatre, Montevallo, Ala. W. H. Trumbauer, director.
- April 1. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by English Department, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Ind. James K. Petersen, director.
- April 4, 5, 6, 7. Annual Convention of the Southern Speech Association, Birmingham, Alabama.
- April 14, 15. National Thespian Eastern Dramatic Arts Conference, Wm. Penn Senior High School, York, Pa. Leon C. Miller, director.
- April 14, 15. Finals of 17th Annual West Virginia High School Drama Festival, sponsored by The National Thespian Society. West Virginia Institute of Technology, Montgomery, W. Va. Carl F. Zerk, festival director.
- April 24, 26, 27, 28. Drama conference and High School Drama Clinic, sponsored by the University Theatre, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Ben Henneke, director.
- April 26-28. Convention of the Southern Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts, Kentucky State College, Frankfort, Ky. Lillian W. Voorhees, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn., Executive Secretary.

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Clinton, Iowa

LYONS High School (Thespian Troupe 359): *The Spider* presented as an all-school play on November 11 with Charlotte Ziegler as director. Dramatics students serve as announcers for a weekly thirty-minute program presented by the school over Station KROS.—*Kay McClintock, Secretary*

Bloomington, Ind.

UNIVERSITY High School Thespian Troupe 414): *The Divine Flora*, *The Valiant*. R. J. Dostator directs dramatics at this school.—*Jackie Smith, Secretary*

Barrackville, W. Va.

BARRACKVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 450): *Here Comes Charlie*, Christmas play, Thespian festival play. The Junior Class will present a full-length play this coming spring. Dramatics students present a weekly radio program. Acting, make-up, stagecraft, and directing are among the topics discussed at the regular dramatics club meetings with sponsor Lewis Hall in charge.—*Doris Jean Ware, Secretary*

Medina, Ohio

MEDINA High School (Thespian Troupe 441): *The Late Christopher Bean*, Christmas pageant. Scenery and stage lighting are being studied by dramatics students this season. Wallace Smith has charge of dramatics.—*Nancy Burris, Secretary*

Provo, Utah

BRIGHAM YOUNG University High School (Thespian Troupe 454): *Rumplestiltskin*, *Little Women*, *Land of the Dragon*, *Sleeping Beauty*. Thespians are presenting a one-act play each month as part of their regular meetings. The study of children's theatre techniques is also being included in the dramatics club programs sponsored for this season. Thespians plan to participate in the drama tournament sponsored by the Brigham

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Young University on January 28. Many students have witnessed performances of plays given by outside groups this season. George Lewis is in charge of dramatics.—*Joanne Haldaway, Secretary*

Cincinnati, Ohio

HUGHES High School (Thespian Troupe 460): *The Tavern*, *Dickens' Christmas Carol*, *The Maker of Dreams*, scenes from *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Poor Magdalena*, and *Hearts to Mend*. Fifteen students attended a performance at the Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, on November 11. Helen Louise Stapleford directs dramatics at this school. Miss Stapleford

is also well known for her acting with the Cincinnati Civic Theatre.—*Judy Hartman, Secretary*

Redondo Beach, Calif.

REDONDO Union High School (Thespian Troupe 462): *George Washington Slept Here*, *Antic Spring*, *A Night at an Inn*. Aletha Browne is the new Thespian sponsor for this season. Troupe 462 publishes a Thespian Alumni Newsletter which is widely read by graduate students. Nancy Simms is troupe president this season.

Idaho Falls, Idaho

IDAHO FALLS Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 480): *You Can't Take It With You*, *Mary of Scotland*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *When the Whirl Wind Blows*, Christmas cantata. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of the current legitimate theatre, with sponsor Jenna Vee Beck in charge.—*Lyn Thurman, Secretary*



Scene from the comedy, *The Divine Flora*, staged by the Junior Class at the Coachella Valley Union High School (Troupe 562), Coachella, Calif Directed by Elaine Buttrud.

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Sunnyside, Wash.

SUNNYSIDE High School (Thespian Troupe 492): *You Can't Take It With You*, *The Last of the Lauries*, *The Trysting Place*, *Trifles*, *Pot Boiler*. Two other major plays will be given this season, with sponsor Lucile Lake in charge. *Sing Out Sweet Land* will be staged by the Music Department.—Irene Van Cleef, Secretary

Salinas, Calif.

SALINAS Union High School (Thespian Troupe 501): *Kind Lady*, *I Remember Mama*. *The Shepherd's Star* was given as a Christmas pageant on December 15 with the Music and Drama Departments cooperating in the production. Abigail A. Dunn directs dramatics at this school.—Betty Ann Cunningham, Secretary

Martinsburg, W. Va.

MARTINSBURG High School (Thespian Troupe 502): *The Dreamer*, *Happy-Go-Lucky*, *The Neighbors*. The class in public speaking is presenting radio programs and members are appearing in programs before local civic groups. Among the various activities considered at the regular meetings of the dramatics club meetings are acting, make-up, and stagecraft. A number of students, with Mary Virginia Dean in charge, have attended performances given by the drama department of Shepherd College and by the Barter Theatre. Students plan to see a professional play in Baltimore soon.

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Duluth, Minn.

CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 506): *Angel Street, Why the Chimes Rang*. Dramatics activities at this school are under the direction of Lydia Buth, who is also Thespian troupe sponsor.—Sharyn Chesson, Secretary

Ellwood City, Pa.

LINCOLN High School (Thespian Troupe 506): *Angel Street, Why the Chimes Rang. Balcony Scene*. Nine new members were

granted Thespian membership recently under the direction of troupe sponsor Marjorie Lostetter. Dramatics club meetings are being held twice a month. Dramatics students plan to attend performances given by professional players as part of their program for this spring.—Joan Biscelgia, Secretary

Thief River Falls, Minn.

LINCOLN High School (Thespian Troupe 508): *Tish, The Intruder*. Variety program given for Homecoming on October 7. The fall

term activities included two radio programs on behalf of the Community Chest Drive and in observance of National Education Week. This school has two dramatics clubs. One club meets in the evening for non-Thespian members, the other meeting is held during the noon hour and is attended by both Thespians and non-Thespians from rural areas who cannot attend the evening meeting. Harriet Mullen is serving as troupe president, with Helen Movius as director of dramatics and troupe sponsor.—Jeanette Anderson, Secretary

Davenport, Iowa

DAVENPORT Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 510): *What A Life, Ladies of the Mop, The Bridge Wore Red Pyjamas, Jerry, The Legend of Poikes Cross, High School Days*. Dramatics students presented a special Christmas program for an old peoples' home. Dramatics students have given part of their meetings to a discussion of television. Other dramatics students ushered for a local theatre when a professional company for *Oklahoma* performed locally. Florence E. Clark has charge of dramatics at this school.—Patricia Ilten, Secretary

Sarasota, Fla.

SARASOTA High School (Thespian Troupe 516): *Meet Me in St. Louis, What A Life, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Mother Is A Freshman* (tentative), *Buddy Answers an Ad, Bread*. The current season also included a Variety show given by the dramatics students in February. Plans for this spring call for a one-act play contest. Make-up, one-act plays and acting are among the subjects which are receiving attention at the regular meetings of the dramatics club. One of the outstanding projects of this season was the performance of *Meet Me in St. Louis* given at the Englewood High School early in November by students of Sarasota, with Etta Scarborough as director. Miss Scarborough is sponsor for Troupe 516.

Gunnison, Colo.

GUNNISON COUNTY High School (Thespian Troupe 517): *The Brain Storm, A Christmas Carol, George Washington Slept Here*. At the time of this writing plans were being made for a program of one-acts to be given in March with Thespian students as directors. Thespians were also making plans for the observance of International Theatre Week, in March. In April dramatics students plan to enter the Western Slope Drama Festival at Western State College, Gunnison. The closing major production of this season will be the senior class play to be given in May. Noraetta Rockwell directs dramatics and Thespian activities at this school.—Joan Hayden, Secretary

Palouse, Wash.

PALOUSE High School (Thespian Troupe 519): *The Drums of Death, Fireman Save My Child*. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of theatre from ancient times to the present. Emphasis is being placed upon America's contributions to the theatre. Another outstanding project of this season is the radio play, *One World or None*, staged to commemorate the birthday of the United Nations. Joseph C. L. Tremblay has charge of dramatics.—Sally Nagle, Secretary

Bucksport, Me.

WALTER GARDNER High School (Thespian Troupe 521): *A Date With Judy*. At the time of this report plans were under consideration for the production of the class play sponsored by the junior and senior high school groups. Dramatics club meetings are being held twice a month this season with troupe sponsor Paul G. Ford in charge. Seven new members were added to the troupe in January under Mr. Ford's direction.—Jean Grindle, Secretary

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- **Mt. Vernon, N.Y.**—"BELLES IN WAITING was considered one of the best ever done by this group of real amateurs, who felt so much at home in the play that many people thought they had some real training." **Circle Lights Community Church.**
- **Louisville, Miss.**—"For a play that is up to date, very adaptable to the high school age, and one that pleases the audience, DO RE MI heads the list." **H. S.**
- **El Centro, Cal.**—"DOUBLE EXPOSURE is full of wholesome humor and was especially liked by the men in our audience. The character portrayal was easily done by high school students, yet offered ample opportunity for individual talent. Our set was the talk of the town." **Central Union High.**
- **Lancaster, Ky.**—"In my six years of play production, HEADED FOR EDEN is the best play that I have produced. I have nothing but praise for it." **H. S.**
- **Lima, Ohio**—"HEADED FOR EDEN was the type that pleased both the audience and the cast. We put it on before the largest audience we have ever had." **Shawnee Centralized High.**
- **Jacksonville, Ill.**—"Our cast for HEADED FOR EDEN enjoyed rehearsals and was made happy on the final nights by a responsive public. Audience comments included: 'a well-chosen play,' 'a pleasing variety of scenes,' 'good humor, but also something to think about,' 'one of the best.'" **H. S.**
- **West Lafayette, Ind.**—"HEADED FOR EDEN showed a pleasing balance of comedy and serious drama which was well received by our audience. The wide range of characters enabled more students to participate and also added variation and sparkle to the play." **H. S.**
- **Piqua, Ohio**—"THE GREEN VINE was a decided hit." **H. S.**
- **Sterling, Colo.**—"GOOD NIGHT LADIES is extremely well-suited to high school production. Our performance was a tremendous success." **H. S.**
- **Rockingham, N. C.**—"GOING PLACES went over as a definite success." **H. S.**
- **Port Arthur, Texas**—"Everyone agreed that GOING PLACES was one of the best St. Mary's has given—and well acted." **St. Mary's High.**
- **Eugene, Ore.**—"Again, cast, audience and director had a grand time with GHOST WANTED." **H. S.**
- **Mitchell, S. D.**—"GHOST WANTED was a great success. It did not have a dull moment." **Notre Dame Academy.**
- **Muscatine, Iowa**—"GHOST WANTED was a great success. We particularly like a mystery that is clever and intriguing, rather than obvious and gory. GHOST WANTED played well and kept everyone in suspense until the end." **H. S.**
- **Danville, Va.**—"FOOT-LOOSE is the best play ever produced by a Senior class at George Washington High School. It is easy to produce and also very worthwhile." **Senior Sponsors.**
- **Denver, Colo.**—"FOOT-LOOSE is without a doubt a most successful domestic comedy. No other comedy has surpassed in popularity. It also has something constructive to offer concerning the problems of parents and offspring." **Annunciation High.**
- **Texas City, Tex.**—"DOUBLE EXPOSURE held the attention of our audience to the last line. It is a delightful play to produce with high school people." **H. S.**
- **Carlsbad, N. M.**—"Scores of people pronounced DOUBLE EXPOSURE the best high school production ever given in Carlsbad." **H. S.**
- **Chicago, Ill.**—"THE INNER WILLY is one of the most interesting plays, from the standpoint of characterization, humor, and audience appeal." **Waller High.**
- **Denison, Iowa**—"WHERE'S LAURIE? is particularly well-suited to the use of young actors without being in the least degree inane." **H. S.**
- **Mattoon, Ill.**—"TWO GENTLEMEN AND VERONA was received equally well in comparison with plays we have given with much elaborate settings and costuming. We highly recommend it for high school production." **H. S.**
- **Kansas City, Mo.**—"Two Gentlemen and Verona was a decided hit." **Southeast High.**
- **West Palm Beach, Fla.**—"SPRING FEVER played to an audience of 900 people. It was full of action and the situations were very funny; the audience gave the young players enthusiastic applause." **Palm Beach High.**
- **Bessemer, Pa.**—"I can strongly recommend SPRING FEVER. It is certainly a play suitable for high school students. It arouses enthusiasm both with the players and with the audience." **H. S.**
- **New Haven, Conn.**—"SPRING FEVER is ideal for an amateur group." **St. Mary's Academy.**
- **Detroit, Mich.**—"SPRING FEVER was a real success." **St. Rita High.**
- **Ponca City, Okla.**—"This is the third time I have produced SHIRT SLEEVES in eight years and each time I am more than well-satisfied." **H. S.**
- **Lincoln, Ill.**—"ONE WILD NIGHT proved to be a very successful play for high school students." **H. S.**
- **Wichita, Kan.**—"ONE WILD NIGHT is a sure-hit with both cast and audience." **Planeview High.**
- **Seattle, Wash.**—"Believe me, ONE WILD NIGHT we'll long remember. May we have more like it!" **Ballard High.**
- **Prince Frederick, Md.**—"ONCE AND FOR ALL was exactly what we needed for our Senior play." **Calvert County High.**
- **Peoria, Ill.**—"ONCE AND FOR ALL was one of the best dramatic productions we have staged in our high school." **Woodruff High.**
- **Louisville, Ky.**—"I can give no comment quite as effective as that made in a letter to us from a Louisville pastor: 'I wish every young veteran could see NEW FIRES. I got more from it than from some sermons I have heard.' As for my own views, it has been many a day since we have given a play that so delighted our audiences." **Shawnee High.**
- **Greensboro, N. C.**—"NEW FIRES is one of the best plays I have ever directed. It is so well-written that every member of the cast knows just how to say his lines, what to do, and why." **Rankin High.**
- **Pasco Robles, Calif.**—"LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR was most successfully produced, delighting both the students and the audience." **H. S.**
- **Tulsa, Okla.**—"LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR is one of the finest comedies we have ever presented." **Webster High.**
- **Alltoona, Pa.**—"IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD worked out very well and was enthusiastically received." **H. S.**
- **Murphysboro, Ill.**—"Students and townspeople are still talking about what a 'grand play' IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD was." **Township H. S.**

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ANTHONY High School (Thespian Troupe 533): *Grandad Steps Out*, *Wilbur Takes His Medicine*, *Be Home by Midnight*. At the time of this report attention was being given to plans for the production of a senior class play in March, with Lawrence W. King, troupe sponsor, in charge. Dramatics club meetings are devoted to the study of stagecraft and the art of showmanship. One of the major activities sponsored by the dramatics students so far this season was the exchange of an assembly program with Caldwell High School. Six students received Thespian membership during the fall term.—*Marilyn Button, Secretary*

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LINCOLN High School (Thespian Troupe 525): *Night of January 16th*, *Grown Up*, *The Perfect Date*, *Comin' Round the Mountain*. Thespian and dramatics club members presented a program of four workshop plays as one of their first projects for the spring semester. The same groups were responsible for the presentation of a radio in observance of International Theatre Week in March. Puppets is one of the subjects which is being studied at the dramatics club meetings with troupe sponsor Harriet Schleich in charge. The year's program also calls for an exchange of plays with the high schools at Stevens Point and Marshfield, Wisconsin.—*Ethel D. Farris, Secretary*

WEST VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL

Thirty high schools have registered for a series of four district festivals to be held in West Virginia this spring under the direction of The National Thespian Society. District festivals will be held at West Liberty College (April 1), Fairmont State College (March 11), Marshall College (March 25), and Concord College (March 18). The state finals will be held on April 14, 15, at the West Virginia Institute of Technology, Montgomery, W. Va., with Prof. Carl F. Zerke as director.

Lake City, Fla.

COLUMBIA High School (Thespian Troupe 522): *Andante*, *The Christmas Angels*, *The Shawl*. Thespian of this school have been active in several drama projects this season. Scenery and make-up are among the subjects considered at the dramatics club meetings, with troupe sponsor Ola Lee Means in charge. Plans for this season include attendance at three productions given by a local community theatre.—*Xandra Finlayson, Secretary*

Albert Lea, Minn.

SENIOR High School (Thespian Troupe 550): *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Feathers in a Gale*, *Good Theatre*. Another major theatrical project of this season was the Student Revue given late in January before capacity audiences. Skits, readings, pantomimes and one-act plays are given as part of the programs sponsored by the dramatics club. Another activity that has attracted much attention this year are the radio programs given by students over the local radio station. An exchange program with the neighboring high school won much favorable comment. Ardella Grier is directing all dramatics activities this season.—*Vera Kaushagen, Secretary*

Kimball, W. Va.

KIMBALL High School (Thespian Troupe 542): *A Ready Made Family*, *Jerry Meets Cupid*. Dramatics students have been responsible also for several playlets given for the school assembly programs with Cortez A. Purcelle as director.—*Fannie Morton, Secretary*

San Diego, Calif.

SAN DIEGO High School (Thespian Troupe 551): *Peg of My Heart*, *Woman of Character*, *Land of Heart's Desire*. The fall term also included the production of a Christmas play. Lois Perkins has charge of dramatics activities at this school.



Students of the Roosevelt High School (Thespian Troupe 561), Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with Robert D. Sheets as director, observe National Drama Week with a broadcast over a local radio station.

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to an attractive, somewhat older man, who, trying hard to be fair and give Jenny a chance to meet eligible youngsters, almost risks losing the girl he really cares for. But it turns out that this man has been Jenny's choice from the very first. Her consenting to go out with an amusing but somewhat over-enthusiastic follower of jive, has been in the line of duty, and the young man's amusing antics end up by boring her. The whole play is made doubly attractive and amusing by the presence of several young girls and the young boy above mentioned, all of whom somehow manage to make Jenny "hep." Or, rather, so they think, since Jenny remains to the end a very lovely, simple and attractive girl, and her union with the man she loves is a proper solution to all the plots and plans of the various characters.

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Say You Saw It In *Dramatics*



Float displayed by Thespian Troupe 927 of the Sheldon, Iowa, High School, preceding homecoming game on October 7. Lillian M. Holmes directs dramatics and Thespian activities at this school.

Meadow Bridge, W. Va.

MEADOW BRIDGE High School (Thespian Troupe 599): *There Go the Grooms, The Funny Brats, Wilbur Takes His Medicine, Wilbur Faces Facts*. With Celeste Arritt in charge of dramatics and Thespian activities, students are spending their regular dramatics club meetings to a study of staging and rehearsal techniques. — Kathryn Gilkison, Secretary

North Plainfield, N. J.

NORTH PLAINFIELD High School (Thespian Troupe 558): *Out of the Frying Pan, Jane Eyre, Why the Chimes Rang*. All these productions were given by the dramatics club, with Doris H. Heacox in charge. The dramatics club was also responsible for the production of four special assembly programs given late in October and early in January. Costumes and make-up are among the subjects students are taking up at their regular dramatics club meetings. — Carolyn Brown, Secretary

Beaver, W. Va.

SHADY SPRING High School (Thespian Troupe 698): *The Darling Brats, Sparkin', The Tiger's Claw*. Thespians are presenting a one-act play each month under the direction of Mrs. Preston Crosby, troupe sponsor. The current season got underway with a troupe membership of sixteen students, with Sue Wills as troupe president and Helen Jean Bragg as vice-president. — Patricia Griffith, Secretary

Ellinwood, Kansas

ELLINWOOD High School (Thespian Troupe 659): *Her Emergency Husband, Professor How Could You?, Happy Journey*, Christmas tableau, Easter skit. Thespian membership awarded to six students, with Mary Frances Poppelreiter as sponsor. — Donna Blehm, Secretary

Oxford, Alabama

CALHOUN COUNTY High School (Thespian Troupe 663): *Seven Sisters, Marlenbourg Necklace, Little Women, Rules of Conduct*, Christmas pageant, dance review. Second place received in Beta Contest. Ten students received Thespian membership, with Mrs. Frank Butenschon as sponsor. — Bobby Haywood, Secretary

ADDENDUM

The picture which appeared without a caption on page 22 of our January issue should have been credited to Thespian Troupe 130 of the Army and Navy Academy, Carlsbad, Calif., with Mrs. Wm. C. Atkinson as director. The picture showed a scene from *SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS*.

DIRECTORY OF STAGE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY HOUSES

A revised edition of this helpful Directory is now being prepared under the editorship of W. Frederic Plette, Director of Dramatics, Little Rock Junior College, Little Rock, Ark. We expect the revised edition to be off the press by April 1. Price, 25c per copy. (15c per copy for order of 10 or more copies), remittance with order.

THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY
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Oceanside, Calif.

OCEANSIDE - CARLSBAD Union High School (Thespian Troupe 792): *Uncertain Wings, Uncle Bob's Bride*. Thespian membership awarded to six students, with G. D. Johnson as sponsor.

Fremont, Ohio

THESPIAN Troupe 793 members, Fremont Ross High School, attended the dramatics conference at Bowling Green State University held in October. They also attended the speech conference in Columbus. Theatre parties for *Brigadoon* and *Mr. Roberts* were arranged. The Junior Class produced *Little Women* during the latter part of November, with Imogene M. Forsyth as director.

New Rochelle, New York

TWO performances of *Liliom* were given during November by Thespian Troupe 634 of New Rochelle High School. Emerson Burke is troupe sponsor, with Doris Leighton, assistant. The program for the coming school months includes *Nine Girls, Joan of Lorraine, Meet Me in St. Louis, and Command Decision*. A number of one-act plays will also be given.

Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

GRADE SCHOOL children of Chippewa Falls were guests of Thespian Troupe 144 of the Senior High School for their production of *Cinderella of Loredale*. Genevieve M. Johnson is troupe sponsor. A one-act play, *Happy Journey*, was presented at the Speech Institute held on October 8. Members attended a performance of *Arsenic and Old Lace* by the College Players in Eau Claire. — Noreene Sullivan, Secretary

Portland, Tenn.

PORTLAND High School (Thespian Troupe 564): *Fame From the Attic, The Pink Dress, Lily, Hiring the Maid, Delinquent Parents*. The season's dramatics productions also included a Stunt Night with two performances given by Thespians in November, and a special program in observance of Thanksgiving Day. Major attention this season has been given to radio script writing at the regular dramatics club meetings. The school sponsors two radio programs monthly, with one of the programs given to the broadcast of a play. Mrs. W. T. Hardison has charge of dramatics and sponsors Thespian activities. — Dot Denning, Secretary

Minneapolis, Minn.

ACADEMY OF THE HOLY ANGELS (Thespian Troupe 568). Members of this Troupe under the direction of Sister Caritas sponsored the Second Annual One-Act Play Festival for Catholic high school on November 26. John D. Dugan served as critic judge, with the following schools presenting plays: Academy of the Holy Angels (*Idols*), Saint Anthony's High School (*Joint Owners in Spain*), Mount St. Mary's School (*One Who Called*), Saint Thomas Military Academy (*Career Angel*), Saint Margaret's Academy (*When the Wind-blows*), Saint Agnes High School (*The Dust of the Road*), Saint Joseph's Academy (*Hyacinth of Wheels*). Yvonne Jaeger served as general stage manager.



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What's New Among Books and Plays

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Longmans, Green & Co., Inc.
55 Fifth Avenue, N. Y.

The Clown Who Ran Away, a comedy for children in two acts, by Conrad Seiler. Cast of 10 boys and 9 girls and extras could be played with less, with all female cast, with children or adults. Books, \$1.00. Royalty, \$15. Dodo, a circus clown runs away from the circus and, accompanied by the sound of the distant callopie, runs through the audience to the stage. After a get-acquainted chat with the eager audience, he offers to tell a story. From his two big suitcases he produces and sets up sectioned stage-pieces and when he has finished talking, there are a lamp post, a tree, and "Frunkins Doll Shoppe." Soon the beautiful life-sized dolls appear and perform, are stolen by Ludolph Bernard Boo, a terrible robber, and his assistant, Ugly, and finally rescued by Gladys, the horse. A youthful audience is sure to identify itself with the characters and be enthralled with Dodo and his friends. Easily staged by either children or high school students.—Mary L. Parrish

Three Damsels and a Dam, a comedy in three acts by Mary Daugherty. 5 m., 7 w., and extras. Royalty, \$10.00. One interior and a balcony or dining terrace that can be played before the curtain. Bill Brent, an American engineering a dam in South America, in order to keep Herb Cornell from causing legal difficulties before he can complete the dam, kidnaps Herb's sister, his fiancée, his novel-writing aunt, and the beautiful Barbara West, all traveling in the country, before they can get to him with knowledge that there will be a delay in the drainage of his land. His friend, Tony, and artist helps him entertain the women while he holds them prisoner. Minnie, the Indian house woman, who also tells fortunes, visiting Indians, plenty of action, and the efforts of Bill to make Barbara say she loves him provide action up to the inevitable conclusion, when three pairs of lovers find happiness. A different play, suitable for high schools.—Mary L. Parrish

Ivan Bloom Hardin Co.
Des Moines, Iowa

Baby's First Word, Margaret Sambuck. A young mother calls her husband in the middle of a busy day to tell a long story of baby's first word. A humorous monologue.

Albert, Shoes and Aroma, Rose H. Anderson. A monologue in which a shopper telephones a friend for a long chat while shopping for shoes. Her difficulties with the clerk and with her small son, Albert, furnish the greater part of the conversation.

Prelude to a weekend, by Joyce Vernon Drake. A monologue in which the mother of a family starting on a vacation trip keeps every one on the jump from car to house checking whether they have forgotten anything only to find that she had forgotten to pack the pajamas for the entire family.

The Ups and Downs of Culture, by Andrew Everly. An eccentric professor experiments for his own entertainment by questioning strangers. Not all of them are gullible, but he has his fun with the operator of the elevator in which the scene takes place. Interesting to read, whether or not it would be good contest material.

Birthday Present for Betty. Young man tries to shop for gift for the girl, using the telephone to put in his order. He finds the job of making the right selection too much for him so he settles for roses, instead of the mink coat his order urged in the beginning.—Helen Movius

Walter H. Baker Co.

569 Boylston St., Boston 16, Mass.

Easy Easterettes, by Karin Ashbrand. Valuable material on the Easter theme which has been arranged in short playlets, recitations, exercises and drills. Particularly good for assembly programs in upper elementary grades and junior high schools.

You Don't Have to be Rich, a comedy in three acts, by Jean Provence. Baker's Plays. Royalty, \$10.00. 8 w., 6 m. The happy-go-lucky Hanna's live comfortably doing as they please until a tax foreclosure brings the family together under the golden rule of work. Plot thin. Short play.

Act Alone and Like It, by Mary Louise Hickey. A collection of fourteen character sketches, royalty free for amateur presentation. Clever monologues, many humorous; variety in characterization. Good for school libraries and classes using monologues.

Sudden Romance, a comedy in three acts, by Helen Hunter. Royalty \$10.00. 5 w., 5 m. Mori Christopher, a successful career woman, brings her fiancé to her family home on Cape Cod, for an old-fashioned wedding in the garden. She did not anticipate the reactions of her family who are almost successful in destroying the romance. Very light, rapid pace, humorous lines and good scenes, might be fun to produce with a youthful cast.—Marion Stuart

Simon's Wife, a religious play in 3 acts, by Francis Alvaize. 10 m., 3 w. 2 Ints. Royalty, \$10.00. The play centers about the change in character of Simon Peter's wife, Leah, and her ultimate belief in Christ. Here is a human study of the feelings of Leah and her mother, Rachel, when Simon and Andrew leave home and family to follow Jesus. Through a beggar seeking alms, Leah learns of the desertion of Christ by his followers including Simon, and the shock of their disloyalty inspires Leah to believe and to send her husband forth to find the twelve brethren and fulfill the Master's mission. This play should prove suitable to production by advanced high school casts.—June Lingo

Row, Peterson & Company
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No Moon Tonight, a farce-comedy in three acts, by Ralph MacDonald. 5 w., 6 m. Royalty on application. Mr. Terry, ne'er-do-well and amateur astronomer, seems unable to provide decent food and lodging for his family which consists of teen-agers Susan and Bill, and older daughter, Ellen. Although she knows her father isn't qualified, Ellen fills out an application for him for the position as head of a new Chicago planetarium. Since she has falsely given her father several college degrees and several honors he does not possess, he is selected for the job. When the planetarium sends a representative who learns the sordid truth after a series of unhappy adventures, things come to a climax. However, Mr. Terry's new telescope-microscope and his new book prove to the planetarium people that he could handle the job, so he gets it after all — at \$8000 a year! The morality of this conclusion is doubtful, and there seem to be many unnecessary characters in the play including some very overdrawn. The plot sounds improbable and the simple solving of it sounds impossible, and it seems as if the author had a struggle to find incidents and jokes to fill up the normal length of the play. However, the play, while not extraordinary, is pleasant and is well within the average high school range.—Katharine Taylor

NEW ONE-ACT PLAYS

Reviewed by ROSE G. SMITH
Williamson, West Virginia

Elmer and the Soprano, a comedy in one act, by Beatrice Humiston McNeil. 4M., 10 W. Elmer, of the popular Elmer plays, steers clear of the twins' plans to have him escort the visiting child soprano to the senior picnic. Light entertainment. Good for high school and community groups. Royalty, \$5.00. Walter H. Baker Company.

For Old Times' Sake, a short comedy in one act, by Manuel D. Herbert. 1 M., 1 W. Girl decides between staid fiancé, responsible and present, and former fiancé of greater charm but less stability. Royalty, \$5.00. Samuel French.

After the Fog Lifts, a comedy in one act, by Walter Hackett. 5 M., 3 W. Realizing that they are going to die, the characters unmask themselves. Then they are rescued. Now they must live with each other as though nothing had happened. Mature groups. Royalty, \$5.00. Walter H. Baker Company.

The Foeman, a drama in one act, by Alifa L. Richardson. 3 M., 2 W. The young generation of two early 18th century Northumberland clans hesitatingly begins to grasp a strange, new concept of living — a concept based on love and cooperation instead of hate and retaliation. Gripping. Royalty, \$5.00. Vawser and Wiles, London, England.

April and September, a play in one act, by William Dinner and William Morum. 2 M., 3 W. A middle-aged woman and a young man come simultaneously to the conclusion that they are not in love. The presence of the lady's husband complicates the situation, but he is understanding. Beautifully done. Recommended for college and community groups. Vawser and Wiles, London, England.

Make Mine Murder, a one-act thriller, by Michael Hervey. 2 M., 1 W. A dissatisfied, quarreling married couple lose their way on a bleak moor, and take refuge with a strange and sinister recluse. Good entertainment. Hampton Press, Prittlewell, Essex, England.

The Original Mr. Fixit, a drama in one act by Michael Hervey. 5 m., 6 w. The head porter in the Grand Hotel helps a wife and her erring husband to regain their broken home. Mature groups. Hampton Press, Prittlewell, Essex, England.

I Love You Truly, a comedy in one act, by Elizabeth Montague Birdsall. 3 M., 4 W. Such a state of madness exists in the Talmadge household over the approaching wedding, that the fathers persuade the couple to elope and leave the turmoil behind. Recommended for high school or college groups. Walter H. Baker Company.

Small Town Girl, a comedy in one act, by Glenn Hughes. 3 M., 3 W. A small-town girl, after suffering delusions of grandeur, decides that a small town is the nicest place in the world to live. Good entertainment. Wholesome. High School, college, and community groups. Royalty, \$5.00. Walter H. Baker Company.

The Lawyer of Springfield, a play in one act, by Ronald Dow. 7 M., 1 W. Abraham Lincoln, young lawyer of Springfield, frustrates the attempts of the city council to run the touring players out of town. The players are the Jeffersons and their son, Joseph, who later brings fame to the American stage. Recommended for high school, college and community groups. Walter H. Baker Company.

Don't Call Me Junior, a comedy in one act, by Hugh Bennick. 5 m., 4 w. A rather mad activity over Junior's birthday, Thanksgiving, and unexpected company. Light entertainment for teen-age groups. Samuel French.

T. S. Denison & Company

635 East 22nd St., Minneapolis 4, Minn.

It's a Date, a comedy in three acts, by Jean Provence. 5 m., 10 w. Royalty, \$15.00. This comedy of teen-age life is typical of the usual theme: dates and dances. A lively play suitable for high schools or other groups who wish a play with a light plot, no serious situations and almost all the characters teen age.

The Big Potato, a three-act comedy, by Richard Hill Wilkinson. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$10.00. A domestic comedy in which the even tenor of family life is thrown into confusion because Father has offered a \$5,000 prize for the best potatoes submitted in the contest he is sponsoring. Potatoes pour in, but money to pay the prize does not. Many complications arise, every member of the family has his problems which increase with every additional bushel of potatoes but as usual everything works out well in the end and everybody is happy.

The American Citizen, a three-act comedy-drama, by Jean Provence. 4 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$15.00. This is a timely play for a group looking for a play dealing with present day problems involving the invading "isms" with which American ideals are confronted. A domestic scene but invaded by the dangers of contact with subversive elements. Easily within high school players ability. It has many young characters.—*Helen Movius*

The Dramatic Publishing Co.

1706 South Prairie Ave., Chicago 16, Ill.

On With the New, a comedy in three acts, by John McGreevey. 9 w., 6 m. Percentage royalty plan, \$10.00 to \$25.00. Helen and David Norton take a trip and leave their children in charge of their efficient Aunt Eunice. Now the most valuable possession of the Norton family is an antique chest which Mrs. Norton has already sold to dowager, Mrs. Gresham. With the parents away, the girls get into debt for some Indian beauty preparations sold by a fake French woman. Not knowing their mother's arrangements or the true value of the chest, they sell the chest to Tony, the junk dealer for \$25.00. When Mrs. Gresham comes to collect the chest, the girls try to re-purchase it only to find that Tony has sold it to an antique dealer who wants \$150.00 for it. Then the children sell all the furniture in the living room to the antique dealer to get back the chest. After two frantic acts during which the family sits around on orange crates and pillows, both chest and furniture are redeemed, and Aunt Eunice finds a husband. The situations are humorous, the characterizations are something to work with, and the lines are clever. This is an excellent high school comedy and one easily staged.—*Katharine Taylor*

No Place to Park, a comedy in three acts, by William Davidson. 7 w., 9 m. Royalty, \$25. The four McCormick orphans, led by indomitable, seventeen-year-old Holly McCormick, are desperately in need of a home. At last they manage to rent an apartment in the home of dour spinster, Miss McPherson, who happens to be absent at the time and has left the renting of her house in the hands of her nephew and her caretaker with strict orders that the apartment not be rented to people with children or pets. The McCormicks get the apartment through a ruse and take over. Miss McPherson arrives unexpectedly, but the McCormicks are saved from eviction because nephew, Andrew, falls in love with Holly. There seems to be an over abundance of teen-age characters with little contrast between them. While the story is not unusual, the dialogue is natural and the play would be a simple one for inexperienced high school groups to produce.—*Katharine Taylor*

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How to Produce Children's Programs, a complete production handbook for busy teachers, by Margaret J. Taylor. Price, \$1.00. Within the pages of this small volume is a

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wealth of material concisely and simply presented on all phases of dramatic production within a school. An excellent guide for choosing the play, casting, selecting committees, arranging rehearsals, stage business, short cuts in production, sound effects, costumes, settings, drills, dances and puppet work. Excellent for the teacher doing plays with little training and no time to leaf through many books.—*Myrtle M. Paetznick*

Sixteen is Spring, a comedy in three acts, by Vincent Lindsay. 5 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Kay Brown's yearnings for Hollywood or an illness so she might meet the new doctor seem about to be realized but complications develop when her brother sends in the picture of his girl friend, the doctor proved very professional and the supposed talent scout mistakes the mother for the daughter. With the Hollywood glamor in mind, Mother upsets the household but in the end the talent scout is exposed, the birthday party for Dad goes on and a doctor appears to create the final laugh for the audience. Characters and situations are exaggerated yet easily done by young people in junior and senior high schools.—*Myrtle M. Paetznick*

Reinhold Publishing Corporation

330 W. 42nd St., New York, N. Y.

Theatres & Auditoriums, by Harold Burriss-Meyer and Edward C. Cole. 1949. 227 pages. Price, \$8.00. This book presents plans for the construction of the modern theatre and auditorium from an analysis of functions which buildings of this type perform. The authors give invaluable critical comments upon various problems and details covering all aspects of modern theatre construction. The book covers such matters as audience traffic, scenery, acting area, backstage operations, stage machinery, light, sound, and production services. Unlike other books of this type, *Theatre & Auditorium* discusses theatre facilities from the audience point of view. This reviewer regards this book one of the very best of its kind, and a real tribute to the scholarship and industry of the two authors. All who are in any way concerned with the building of theatre and auditorium plants, and all who are interested in knowing more about equipment for a well-designed theatre, will find this book indispensable. It has an attractive format, profusely illustrated, and set in type which is easily read.—*Ernest Bavelly*

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

14 E. 38th St., New York 16, N. Y.

For Love or Money, a comedy in three acts, by F. Hugh Herbert. 4 w., 4 m., one setting modern costumes. Royalty quoted on application. Friends have gathered in the home of actor Preston Mitchell to extend to him sympathy after the funeral services for his wife. Mitchell's one desire is to be alone and to drop a screen of hypocrisy under which he has lived. The neighbors finally grant his wish, but his peaceful reverie is broken by the sudden appearance of a young woman seeking refuge from the storm. Mitchell's vanity is pricked when the young woman expresses her ignorance concerning the theatre. She has decided moral opinions which force Mitchell into hiring her as his secretary. The neighbor boy offers a counter love attraction, but eventually the girl "gets" Mitchell. Situations are humorous. The play is better for community or college theatres. It was produced (with some cutting) on the radio program,

"Theatre Guild on the Air." It is light and entertaining.—*Marion Stuart*

Home of the Brave, a drama in three acts and 8 scenes easily staged, by Arthur Laurentz. 6 m. Royalty upon application. The play was first presented on December 27, 1945, at the Belasco Theatre, New York. Though the scene is laid in war, the play is timeless, because its theme is timeless, honestly and dramatically presented. The plot concerns Coney, a soldier and a Jew, super-sensitive to the prejudice of his fellow soldiers. The death of Finch, the one friend he has, causes a mental condition that paralyzes his limbs. Because of a serum administered by the understanding doctor, he re-lives the experiences that have affected his mind and in a thrilling climax finds himself again and a new partner to take Finch's place. He and Mingo will go into business together. Mingo doesn't mind that he is a Jew, and says, "After all I can't let that arm of mine go down the drain for nothing." They have risen above handicaps. Each role offers a good opportunity for a thrilling experience in acting. Best suited to colleges and little theatres. The young author is to be congratulated for the touch of genius with which he has given us one of the best plays of our century.—*Mary L. Parrish*

Samuel French

25 W. 45th St., New York, N. Y.

Alice in Wonderland, adapted from Lewis Carroll by Eva Le Gallienne and Florida Freibus. 50 characters. Royalty, \$25.00. The authors have selected the most memorable scenes and blended them in a charming whole. From the moment Alice is discovered the audience follows her completely enchanted and when the play is over each wished to remain for the next performance. An ambitious director can charm adults and children alike with this version of *Alice*. The staging is well planned and a music score is available.—*Roberta D. Sheets*

Oh! Susanna, a comedy with music, by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements. Royalty, \$50.00. If there is a secondary school where directors of plays, glee clubs, the dance and orchestra work together, *Oh! Susanna* would be an ideal production. It is primarily the story of Stephen Foster and his love affair with Jeanie, but the other characters are not merely fillers, they are individuals. The dialogue is good, the selection of Foster melodies a bit different and the ballet and minstrel parts well set up. There are 24 men and 10 women plus all the extras. The setting is simple and the costumes not too difficult. *Oh! Susanna* is a pleasing musical comedy.—*Roberta D. Sheets*

Eighteen in June, a comedy of youth, by Hilda Manning. 5 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Wendy is to graduate from high school on her eighteenth birthday and the day is to be the turning point in her life. She is to play Juliet in a scene from the play and rehearses faithfully. "Romeo" takes things seriously. Wendy, however, is much taken with the young dramatics instructor. Alas!! for hopes and plans — measles strike. (This reviewer who has had two plays invaded by measles this year is most sympathetic.) The day proves to be glamorous after all and ends happily. *Eighteen in June* is a better than average play of teenagers. The characters seem real and the plot entirely possible. It is well worth the royalty.—*Roberta D. Sheets*

Dark Mountain, a mystery comedy in three acts, by Ralph Glenn. 5 w., 5 m. Royalty, ten dollars, and each additional performance, two dollars and fifty cents. In this thriller Mr. Fulton takes his unwilling family on a "healthful" camping trip up the nearby mountain, overlooking a busy air field, which turned out to be a dangerous haunt of a spy who is captured by the estranged sweetheart of Ann Fulton, who is serving as a summer ranger. Unconvincing as to danger, the play may still be light comedy fare for a high school or community theatre.—*June Lingo*

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